ASCETICKS

OR,

The Heroick

Piety & Virtue

OF THE

Ancient Christian

ANCHORETS

AND

COENOBITES

PART I.

Exemplary Asceticks.

By Edward Stephens.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

IT hath been a usual, subtile and wicked Policy of the Devil and Evil Men, first to render Names Odious; and then by affixing them to Persons and Things, thereby to render them so too, with the vulgar; whom, by that means, they impose upon, and make their Tools. By such means have not only the Christians of Old, but also some of the chief Principles of Christianity been much injured and abused: And few Parties there are, who have not one time or other smarted by it. That the well-meaning Reader therefore may not be so abused and imposed upon in his Judgment of the things here put together for the Benefit of all, who can receive them, by the Odious Names of **Monkery** and **Popery**, it is to be observed, that though POPERY, taken properly for the Abuses and Corruptions of the Bishops and Church of Rome, may deserve all the Odium cast upon it, yet may most vile and wicked Abuses be committed by Pretence and Imputation of that Odious Name: And in some things it is hard to say, Whether the People have been more abused by Popery it self, or by the Odium and Imputation of the Name? And not only the People, but the Gospel it self: I may add,

and the Reformation *too. For, while Chriſtian Truths have been miſ-repreſented, and expoſed to Contempt and Odium under the Name of* Popery, *the* Cauſe *on the ſide of* Popery *is ſupported, ſtrengthened, and made ſo much the more defenſible by the intermixture of ſo much Truth; and the* Cauſe *on the ſide of the* Reformation *ſo much the more weakened and diſparaged by the intermixture of ſo much indefenſible Error. Whereas, if they were only things inexcuſable in them which were queſtioned, as Charity doth require, they muſt have ſunk in the Cauſe long before this; but an indiſcreet Affectation of Reformation and uncharitable ſeeking Occaſions, have made a* Reformation *now as needful on the one ſide, as the other. Inſtances of this might be ſhewed in divers particulars; but I need not ſtep out of my way for that, the other Name mentioned may ſerve for that purpoſe here.*

MONKERY *is not only rendered Odious, as of it ſelf, but alſo as a part of* Popery. *And, indeed, if we imagin all that is believed or practiſed by the* Church of Rome *to be* Popery, *it may be ſo: but then we ſhall leave little of true Chriſtianity for the* Reformation: *But if what is* true Chriſtianity *be not* Popery, *than neither is* Monkery, *as ſome are pleaſed to call the* Monaſtick Life; *And that it is not only true Chriſtianity, but the Practice of it in the greateſt Perfection that Mortals are capable of, I am apt to think will be very plain to any who will conſider what here follows with an unprejudiced and competent Judgment. And therefore I ſhall not need to ſay more here, but only deſire the Reader to ſuſpend his Judgment till he hath peruſed and conſidered it well.*

THE

THE Beginning and Progreſs OF Contemplative Living, AND Religious Societies.

THAT there are in the very Nature of Man ſome *Principles of Inclination to Religion*, which, if not corrupted by *Evil Education*, or other unhappy Occurrences, do inſenſibly grow and increaſe in Strength and Vigour, and in due time exert themſelves in Action; though for ſome time they lie dormant as it were, and do not appear; even as ſome others, which in all Animals are manifeſtly moſt Natural, and yet appear not till after ſome growth toward Maturity; hath been obſerved, believed, and aſſerted, by Men of greateſt Reputation for Learning and Wiſdom, both in Ancient times, and to this Day.

These Principles have among Man-kind been, in many much *corrupted and stifled* by Evil Education, or Converſation with Evil Perſons, and by the Impreſſions, Energy, and Inſtigations of Evil Spirits; but in others again much *cheriſhed and improved*, not only by Good Education and Converſation, and by Conſideration of the Works of Nature; but moreover, and eſpecially, by the kind Influences of the Divine Majeſty, and of his Good Miniſtring Spirits.

From hence, in all Ages, and in all Parts of the World, have been produced and raiſed up Philoſophers, and Wiſe, and Holy Men and Women, who have been as Lights and Examples to the reſt, of ſeveral ſorts, according to their *different Ways of Living*; ſome living a Life of *Civil Converſation* with others, but ſtrictly conſcientious, *walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs*, as is ſaid of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, *Luk.* 6. or, to ſpeak more comprehenſively, *living in all Good Conſcience before God*, as St. *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Act.* 23. 1. or according to the Character of *Job*, *Perfect, and Upright, fearing God, and eſchewing Evil*, Job 1. 1. Others living a more abſtracted Life of *Retirement* and *Contemplation*; abſtracted not only from Buſineſs in the World, but alſo from ordinary Converſation with Men, that they might without Diſtraction converſe with God, and his bleſſed Miniſtring Spirits: and others

again

again living a kind of mixt or middle Life between these two, avoiding unnecessary Business and Incumberances, and exercising *Recollections* and *Abstraction*, as much as their Occasions would permit, and even in, and amidst their Business.

Of those Three Ways of Living, that more strict and *Contemplative Life* is believed, by divers Learned Men, to have been begun by *ENOS*, or in his time; and not without reason: For, as the Principles before-mentioned were apt to produce such an Effect, so there seems to be something singular noted concerning *Religion*, or some *Religious Institution* or *Practice* in that Sacred Record, *Gen. 4. ult.*

But of the more ancient Times, not only before the Flood, but also for some Ages after the Flood, we know but very little: But in the Times of which, we have some more Knowledge, besides PRIESTS, and professed PHILOSOPHERS, there have always been both *single Persons*, and *compleat* or *formed Societies of People*, who, discerning the Vanity and Emptiness of Earthly things, and Solidity and Perminence of Heavenly things, withdrew themselves from those of the Earth, as much as their Mortal State could bear, and applyed themselves intirely to the Contemplation and Prosecution of those of a more excellent Nature, living an *Abstracted* and *Angelick Life* in Mortal Flesh,

in Holy Converſation, and Favour with God and his bleſſed Miniſtring Spirits. And ſome did actually and expreſsly conſecrate themſelves by *Vow* unto the ſpecial Service of God.

Of which Sort were thoſe among the *Jews*, called NAZARITES, becauſe they did ſo ſeparate themſelves from among Men, to attend upon God. The Sacred Hiſtory, *Numb.* 6. is a Record, not of the Original, but of the Divine Approbation of *Nazarites*, which, though that be very ancient, yet were much more ancient, and more ancient than any Man can tell: And God's Ordering of the *Rites* and *Circumſtances* of their Conſecration and Obſervations for that People, is a manifeſt Indication of his Divine Approbation of the thing it ſelf, which had been in uſe long before.

All do agree that they were *of Two ſorts*; ſome, only for certain time; others, perpetual for their whole Life; and thoſe may again be diſtinguiſhed into Three ſorts, *viz.* Such as were call'd or appointed by God, as *Samſon*, a *Nazarite unto God from the Womb*, Judg. 13. 5, 7. 16. 17. and as St. *John the Baptiſt*; conſecrated effectually, and *filled with the Holy Spirit even from his Mother's Womb*, Luk. 1. 15. Such as were dedicated by their Parents, as *Samuel* by his Mother, 1 *Sam.* 1. 10, 28. And ſuch as did freely offer themſelves: And this *Free-will Offering of themſelves*, though but for

a certain time, God did accept no leſs than the Free-will Offerings of their Goods, or any thing they had, *v. Lev.* 22. 18, 21, 23: 27. 2. and therefore ordered the Rites and Circumſtances of their Conſecration and Obſervations, as was ſaid before. And, on the contrary, the Calamities of *Nazarites* is reckoned as a part of the Puniſhment of the People, by *Jeremiah* the Prophet, *Lam.* 4. 7. But it is reckoned by God among his Divine Favours to that People, that he raiſed up *Nazarites* amongſt them; and reckoned with his bringing them up from the Land of *Egypt*, and raiſing them Prophets amongſt them. *Amos* 2. 10, 11. *I raiſed up of your Sons for Prophets, and of your Young Men for Nazarites.* Though they might freely offer themſelves, yet it was God that did ſecretly inſpire and incline their Wills. And therefore theſe were *Holy*, as *Origen* hath well obſerved, *Hom.* 11. *in Levit. If any one devotes himſelf to God, if any one intangles himſelf in no ſecular Buſineſs, that he may pleaſe Him, to whom he hath approved himſelf; if any one is ſeparate from the reſt of Men, who live Worldly Lives, and are obliged in ſecular Buſineſs, not ſeeking the things which are upon Earth, but which are in Heaven, he is deſervedly called HOLY, or SAINT.* And after much to this purpoſe, he concludes in theſe Words: *From all which it is clear, how every one of us, who will be Holy, ought to be conſecrated to*

God,

God, and thenceforth be imployed in no Business or Acts which relate not to God.

So likewise the *Colledges or Schools of the* PROPHETS, though we meet with no express mention of them till in 1 *Sam.* 10. 5. yet certain it is, that they were much more ancient, who, under the Name of *Prophets*, lived very abstracted Lives. The very change of the Denomination, mentioned in the chap. next foregoing, 1 *Sam.* 9. 9. is an Evidence of that, *viz.* That he, who was then call'd a *Prophet*, was afore-time call'd a SEER; and therefore when one went *to inquire of the Lord*, they said, *Come, and let us go to the Seer.* And if *to inquire of the Lord*, was *to go to the Seer*, than that leads us back to the time of *Rebecca*, *Gen.* 25. 22. for *Seers*; and how much farther back no Man knows: for that certainly was no new thing then. Nor doth it appear that the *Schools of the Prophets* were first instituted by *Samuel*: But that they lived such *abstracted Contemplative Lives*, is undeniable, both from the Nature of their Profession, and from the Particulars of the Matter of Fact of their Conversation mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

Nor were there *Men* only, but WOMEN also, who did very anciently, leaving the World, apply themselves to Matters of Devotion, though perhaps not with so solemn Consecration; such as *Anna*, a Propheteſs, who having lived seven years

years a Wife, lived afterwards a Widow till eighty four years of Age, and departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers Night and Day. For of this ſort of *Religious Women* were there many among the *Iſraelites*, as anciently as the Tabernacle in the Wilderneſs, as we are informed by the *Jews*, and the moſt learned Criticks of this Age; as *Munſter*, *Fagius*, *Vatablus*, and others, upon *Exodus* 38. 8. And this, it is very probable, was a great Aggravation of the Sins of the Sons of *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 22. that the Women, whom they abuſed, were ſuch as theſe, *who aſſembled at the Door of the Tabernacle*, as learned Criticks inform us. And putting all theſe Notices together, it ſeems that ſuch Religious Devout Women there were among the *Jews*, at leaſt from the time of their firſt abode in the Wilderneſs, while they had the Temple ſtanding amongſt them.

And if ſo, Why not long before, even while in *Egypt*? Had they not received Religious Inſtructions from their Anceſtours? or, Did they retain none of them? or, Did they ſee nothing of Religion practiſed among the *Egyptians*? and, Had they not the ſame Natural Propenſation to Religion, which is common to all Men? We ſee how ready and expert all the Women were at the Red-Sea, *Exod.* 15. 1, 20. with *Miriam*, a Propheteſs, to anſwer *Moſes* and the Men; and, Can we imagin that all Religion had

had been extinguiſhed, or lain dormant in their Abode in *Egypt*? No certainly; their hard Servitude, though it might hinder their more Solemn Worſhip, yet it could not hinder, but did rather excite and provoke to more retired and ſecret Devotion. And indeed, that Servitude with Rigour and hard Bondage, was not till a little before their Deliverance; and even then do we find that generous Magnanimity, even among the *Hebrew* Women, the *Midwives*, as to obey God rather than Man, *Exod.* 1. 17.

The Companies of the PROPHETS, mentioned 1 *Sam.* 10. 10. and 19. 20. ſuch as elſe-where are call'd *the Sons of the Prophets*, 1 *King.* 18. 4: 20. 35. 2 *King.* 2. 3, 5, 7, 15: 4. 38: 6. 1, 2: 9. 1. were a ſort of Religious Perſons, who lived Abſtracted Contemplative Lives; many of them plainly *Cœnobitical Lives*, and ſome *Anachoretical* or *Hermete Lives*, as St. *Antony*, and others among the Chriſtians did, as *Elias*, 1 *King.* 17. 1. and *Eliſha*, 1 *King.* 19. 6. So that St. *Hierom* ſaid very truly, *Every Order or Inſtitution of Life hath its Principals* or *Leaders*; and then after divers Inſtances in others, he adds; *Our Leaders are ſuch as* Paul, *as* Antony, *as* Julian, *as* Hilarian, *as the* Macerius's: *And to return to the Authority of the Scriptures, our Prince or Leader was* Elias, *was* Eliſha; *our Leaders were the Sons of the Prophets, who dwelt in Fields, and Deſerts, or Solitary Places, and made themſelves*

themſelves Tabernacles or Cells by the River of Jordan: *Of this Company were alſo the Sons of* Racab, *&c. Ep.* 13. *ad Paulin.* p. 34. and elſewhere, *The Sons of the Prophets, whom we read to have been Monks in the Old Teſtament, did build themſelves Cottages or Cells near the River of* Jordan, *and leaving the Crowds of the Cities, lived on Barley-Cakes and Field-Herbs,* Ep. 4. ad Ruſticum. *pa.* 11. And if ſome of them lived in Cities, that doth no more invalidate what St. *Hierom* ſaith, than *Monaſteries* being brought into Cities by St. *Baſil*, is an Argument againſt their being Monks, who have dwelt in ſuch ever ſince. Such Cavils do only prove the Partiality and Diſingenuity of the Authours, and ſignifie no more to any Perſon of Judgment and Candour; ſince they cannot deny, but are forced to confeſs, *That the Prophets*, Samuel, Elias, *and* Eliſha, *did inſtitute Colledges, in which many Diſciples did live together.* So then they lived a *Cœnobitick Life:* and, What was their Food and Rayment? Was it coſtly and delicious, or poor and mean? and, What was *their Imployment?* Can we imagin it to have been other, than Studying the Scriptures, after *Moſes* his time, and the large Book of Nature, the Works of God, of Creation, of Providence, Prayers, Pſalms, and Divine Contemplation, and Works and Labours about what was neceſſary for them, and no more? And if we conſider the admirable Graces

of

of the *Ancient Christian Monks*, it will be an hard matter for an honest Man to find any difference between the *Christian Monks* and the *Jewish Prophets*, more than in Name. And for the Antiquity of these, Is it any Argument that there were none before, if we do not read of any before? How and by whom did they *inquire of the Lord*? Was *Israel* only without Prophets? Was *Balaam* the first in his Nation, or any other? or, Were there Prophets, who did not ordinarily live Prophetick Lives? or, if they did, What was the Difference? But such Prophane Spirits as have too long contemned and insulted upon the most Heroick Professors of Christianity, and abused the People with their Sophistry, must answer for their Presumption, Rashness, Temporizing, and incouraging of Sacriledge before God, though the Degeneracy of the Modern Monks had provoked his Judgments upon them; and among Men their Names will be little regarded hereafter. But all are not alike, and therefore I will here add a Note of *Peter Martyr*'s, concerning this Matter, upon 2 *King.* *We will moreover observe*, (saith he) *that the Disciples of the Prophets did live together with their Preceptors; For so they say*; The Place where we dwell with thee, is too strait for us, *It seems to have been a kind of Monastick Life, but free without Vows or Superstitious.* (But *Vows* we find approved by God in the *Nazarites*,

and

and practiſed by St. *Paul*, and others; and that they were not in uſe among theſe, is more than any one can prove: but he goes on:) *They exerciſed themſelves in Divine Scriptures and Hymns; and alſo in Holy Prayers: They were often ſent to edifie the People, and to confirm Holy Men, who lived among ſt Idolaters in ſound and true Religion. They ſeem moreover to have exerciſed ſome Arts, working with their Hands to get a Maintenance for themſelves*, &c. And ſo much for this.

At the ſame time with *Eliſha* lived *Jonadab* the Son of *Rechab*, 2 *King.* 10. 15. who inſtituted another Order of Religious Perſons, called after his Father's Name, RECHABITES. Theſe were not of any of the Tribes of *Iſrael*; but *Kenites* deſcended of *Jethro*, *Moſes* his Father-in-Law. *v.* 1 *Chron.* 2. 55. *Jud.* 1. 16. who was Prieſt of *Midian*, *Exod.* 2. 16. 3. 1. 18. 1. and one who worſhipped the true God: for he bleſſed God, when he heard the Relation of what he had done for the *Iſraelites*, *Exod.* 18. 10. and in the uſual Form in ſuch Caſes, juſt as *Melchizedeck* did long before, upon the Victory of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 14. 20. but they are reckoned among them of the Tribe of *Juda*, 1 *Chron.* 2. 55. becauſe they came up with them out of the Wilderneſs, *Jud.* 1. 16. and for that reaſon, and becauſe they dwelt in Tents, are thought to be call'd *the Tents of Juda*, Zech.

12.

12. 7. But they are call'd, the *Families of the Scribes*, 1 Chron. 2. 55. And therefore both from their Deſcent, and from their Quality of *Scribes*, and from their Inſtitution, and from the very Form of God's Promiſe to them, we may reaſonably conclude them to have been *a Religious Order*. And indeed, that alone is ſufficient to demonſtrate it was ſome ſpecial Service to God, they were imploy'd in: for it is expreſſed in the ſame terms, which are uſed concerning the *Tribe of Levi*, when the Lord ſeparated them to his ſpecial Service, *viz. to ſtand before the Lord*, Deut. 10. 8. *v.* 2 Chron. 29. 11. Ezek. 44. 11, 15. And though we have little more Account of them, than only in *Jer.* 35. yet there have we a plain Account of theſe *Three great things concerning them*. 1. The Inſtitution of their Progenitor. 2. Their Religious Obſervance for Three Hundred Years paſt. And, 3. the Approbation of both by Almighty God. The Inſtitution may be thought very ſevere; and the more, becauſe without any ſpecial manifeſt Reaſon: and, by conſequence, their ſo punctual Obſervance rather Superſtitious than Reaſonable; and yet both are greatly approved by God: Whence it is very plain, that ſuch Inſtitutions, and the ſtrict Obſervance of them, are lawful, and well-pleaſing to God; and therefore that it is great Preſumption and Inconſiderateneſs to cenſure them as Superſtition. But the Evidence of

of Truth hath extorted this Confeſſion from an Adverſary, and as Sinifter an Interpreter of theſe things, as he could well tell how to be; *viz. That their Father gave them theſe Precepts for this very purpoſe, that thereby he might ſet them free from the Cares and the Pleaſures of the World, that ſo they might, with the more leiſure, imploy themſelves in the Study of the Scriptures, and of Divine Matters:* Which was the very Buſineſs of the Chriſtian Monks. And if they continued in Being at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as is believed; (as well it may, if we believe the Promiſe of God to them;) and that *Simeon*, who ſucceeded *James*, Biſhop there, was one of them; there is no doubt but many of them received the Chriſtian Faith, and retained the Inſtitutions of their Progenitor, there being nothing inconſiſtent between them. Some of the *Jews* underſtand that of *Zechar.* 12. 7. *The Lord ſhall ſave the Tents of Juda firſt*; of this People, becauſe they lived in Tents, came up with that Tribe out of the Wilderneſs, and are reckoned among them, 1 *Chron.* 2. 55. and that *the Lord ſhall ſave them firſt*, becauſe to them the Meſſiah ſhall firſt be diſcovered. And whether the *Therapeuts*, of whom *Philo* writes, and the firſt Converts by St. *Mark* about *Alexandria*, might not be of thoſe People, may be conſidered.

It is true, we have no mention of them in the Gospel; nor have we of the ESSEANS, who yet are known to have been a Religious Sect among the *Jews*, of great Antiquity, though not once mentioned in all the Scriptures; a People, who lived a Religious Abstracted Life: But of them I shall say no more in this place, because I intend the full Relations both of *Josephus*, and of *Philo*, concerning them hereafter.

Nor shall I here say any thing of the THERAPEUTS, another Religious Society of the *Jews*, as *Philo* saith, not only for that reason, because I intend *Philo*'s Relation of them hereafter; but because I conceive this no proper place for it: For I am well satisfied that they were some of those who were first converted to Christianity, probably of the *Jews*, and possibly of the *Essean*, notwithstanding all the Cavils which some disingenious and prejudiced Persons have, in these last Ages, strained their Wits to raise against it; though they might retain some Sentiments and Practices peculiar to themselves for some time; as did they at *Jerusalem*, as may be understood from *Act.* 15. 1, 5. *Gal.* 2. 4, 12. *&c.* For, it is certain, they were never heard of before that time, nor any such since, but *Christians*, who, from that time, inhabited the same places; and from thence, after the Persecution ceased, were the *Ascetick Communities* propagated to *Palestin*, and those parts first, and afterward into *Europe*.

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The Precursor to our Saviour, St. JOHN *BAPTIST*, according to the Prediction of the Angel, *Luk.* 1. 15. was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his Mother's Womb, and drank neither Wine nor strong Drink; had his Rayment of Camels Hair, and a Leathern Girdle about his Loins; and his Meat was Locusts and wild Honey, *Mat.* 3. 4. and was in the Desert till the day of his Shewing unto *Israel*, Luk. 1. 80. but in the Fifteenth Year of the Reign of *Tiberius Cæsar*, *Annas* and *Cajaphas* being the High Priests, the Word of God came unto him in the Wilderness, *Luk.* 3. 1, 2. and being sent of God, *Joh.* 1. 6. he preached and baptized in the Wilderness, *Mat.* 3. 1. *Mar.* 1. 3. and the People from *Jerusalem* and all *Judea* went out to him, and were baptized of him, *Mat.* 3. 5, 6. This was a *Life* not only of *Retirement* and *Abstraction* from the World, such as was also that of the *Cœnobites*, who lived in Religious Communities, but plainly an *Eremetick*, or *Hermetick Life*. And this being by one fill'd with the Holy Ghost from his Mother's Womb, and therefore by one raised up by Him, who had raised up the *Nazarites* before; with good cause do the ancient Christian Writers repute Him a Prince of the Monks and Hermites raised up among the Christians; and so good cause, that they who oppose it, may seem to oppose not only the Sentiments and Opinions of Men, but,

out of Prejudice and misguided Zeal, the very Acts of God, very disingeniously and inconsiderately to serve a Party.

And for our *SAVIOUR* Himself, though we have no particular Account of his Life till about the Thirtieth Year of his Age, yet we cannot question but he did practice Himself what he did recommend to others; and that it was a Life of the highest Perfection: The only particular of his Life before, that is left upon Record, is, That when he was Twelve Years Old, he tarried behind at *Jerusalem* at the Feast of the *Passover*, and *Joseph* and his Mother knew not of it; and after Three Days was found in the Temple sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them Questions; and that all who heard him were astonished at his Understanding and Answers: and when his Mother asked him, why he had thus dealt with them; and told him, that they had sought him sorrowing; he reply'd, *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business?* and that he went down with them, and came to *Nazareth*, and was subject to them. At his *Baptism* we see how careful he was to *fulfill all Righteousness*. Afterwards he declared to the *Jews*, That he *sought not his own Will, but the Will of the Father*, who sent him; and to his Disciples, That it was his Food to do the Will of him who sent him,

and to finish his Work, (*Joh.* 5. 30: 4. 34.) That he lived a Life of *Poverty* from his Birth, is very plain in the Evangelical History; and that by his own choice, certainly no ingenuous Person will deny; and therefore of voluntary Poverty. And that he lived also a Life of *Chastity*, is not to be questioned. Much less that it was a Life of *Abstraction*, *Recollection*, and continual Adherence to, and Communion with the Father. And all this being put together, and well considered, what was it other than a most perfect *Ascetick Life*; the Great Exemplar so generously and heroickly Exemplified by those many and numerous Choires of Holy *Christian Nazarites*, of whom the World, especially this Lazy, Tepid, Unprofitable, Sensual Generation, which despiseth the Memory, and reproacheth the Common Name heretofore with them, and others venerable, is not worthy.

And this Life which he lived Himself, he did recommend to others, as by his own Illustrious Example, so also by his Doctrin: though he injoyned it to none, especially in that high degree. For *Chastity* and *Celebacie*, he doth not barely approve it, but speaks of it as a special Gift of God, *Mat.* 19. 11. which *all cannot receive, save they to whom it is given.* And when he had said, *There be Eunuchs, who have made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heavens sake*; he adds, *He that is able to receive it, let him*

receive it: in both ſpeaking of ſomething more excellent than ordinary; and beſides, in theſe Words, *There be Eunuchs, who have made themſelves Eunuchs*, &c. he plainly affirms, that it was a thing in Uſe and Practice at that time, (as it had been long before) which he ſo approved and recommended to all, who could receive it. And concerning *voluntary Poverty*, to the Young Man, who deſired to know what he ſhould do that he might have Eternal Life; and had kept the Commandments from his Youth up; he replyed, one thing thou lackeſt; if thou wilt be *Perfect*, go and ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven; and come, take up the Croſs, and follow me, *Mat.* 19. 21. *Mar.* 10. 21. *Luk.* 18. 22. And *Forſaking all*, he maketh an indiſpenſible requiſite to the being his Diſciple: *Whoſoever he be of you who forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple*, Luk. 14. 33. As to *Religious Obedience, and voluntary Subjection to the Order and Determination of another well experienced in the Ways of God*, for an Exerciſe of an intire Subjection of the Creature to the Creator, What elſe is it but a very proper and uſeful Mean and Expedient for the acquiring the Habit, and a continual Exerciſe of that great Doctrin of our Saviour, of *Self-denyal*, and taking up the Croſs, *Mat.* 16. 24. *Mar.* 8. 34. warranted and approved by God

in

in the *Recubites*, and by our Saviour in his Subjection to *Joseph* and his Mother? Which, though *Self-denial* be a Precept, is a voluntary Act of the nature of a Reasonable Free-will Offering; and a doing it daily, as is expressed, *Luk.* 9. 23. a Living in it, and a continual Reasonable Sacrifice of the prime Faculties of the Soul for the Service of God. And the whole Business of *an abstracted Ascetick Life*, What is it but a reasonable, religious and devout Exercise of our Saviour's Doctrin, in his Admonition to *Martha*, Luk. 10. 41, 42. against being careful and troubled about many things, when it was only for a short Entertainment of Himself; and that One thing is needful; and that *Mary*'s Choice was of the better part? In his Sermon upon the Mount, of taking no thought for our Life, *Mat.* 6. 25.—34. in his Parable of the Sower, concerning the Cares, and Riches, and Pleasures of this Life; the Thorns which choak the Seed of the Word, that it bringeth no Fruit to Perfection, *Luk.* 8. 14. and concerning Watching, that we be not surprized, *Mat.* 24. 42. 25. 13. *Mar.* 13. 35. *Luk.* 21. 36.

And now, if any one please, as many have done, to make any question concerning the meaning of our Saviour, or the Interpretation of any part of this, what more Authentick Evidence of that can be reasonably desired than what the wisest of Men have always approved

and had recourse to in such Cases, Usage and Practice afterward; which daily Experience in the Construction of Laws, and ancient Records and Deeds, doth sufficiently confirm. The APOSTLES certainly practised all this, as far as was consistent with their Circumstances and Business they were imployed in; and Preached it, and recommended it by their Doctrin too, as far as the Circumstances of the People and the Times would bear. They forsook all; not one of them Married any Wife afterward, though they might have done it; and were so far abstracted from all Diversions and Distractions of the World, that they ordered Deacons for other necessary Works, that they might give themselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministery of the Word, or to Preaching. And the effect of their Preaching, and of the powerful Operation of the Holy Spirit upon the People, was, that *they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrin, in Communion in breaking Bread, and in Prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things Common; and sold their Possessions and Goods, and parted them to every Man had need*, &c. *Act.* 2. 42. And again, *Act.* 4. 32. *The Multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart, and of one Soul; neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things Common*: For *as many as were Possessors of Lands or Houses, sold them,*

and

and brought the Prices of the things that were ſold, and laid them down at the Apoſtles Feet.

What is here briefly ſaid of the *firſt Converts* and *Primitive Chriſtians* at *Jeruſalem*, agrees ſo well, all things conſidered with what *Philo* more largely relates concerning thoſe about *Alexandria*, whom he calls THERAPEUTS, who were never heard of before, nor after, under any Denomination, unleſs of that of *Chriſtians*, which began early at *Antioch*, and was ſoon ſpread over the World where any Diſciples of Chriſt were, and took place of all others, that, as the Ancients do affirm, we alſo have great reaſon to reſt ſatisfied, that they were indeed ſuch, notwithſtanding all the Cavils of ſome of the laſt Age, which have ſince been ſufficiently refuted. It is true, they did not long appear in that form of Communities; for they were diſſolved at *Jeruſalem*, and diſperſed into divers Regions by that great Perſecution, after the Death of *Stephen*, and, doubtleſs, by like Occaſions in other Places: But the Example and Doctrin of our Saviour and his Apoſtles could not but provoke many, eſpecially among the *Jews*, before well-diſpoſed for it, to forſake the World, and betake themſelves to a retired, abſtracted, Contemplative Life. The Natural Inclination in them was excited and fortified by the various Examples which were common among them before, and then receiving ſuch further

further Encouragement from our Saviour and his Apostles, both directly and indirectly, from several Doctrines of the Gospel, concerning *Self-denyal*, *Mortification*, *Contempt of the World*, *Heavenly-mindedness*, &c. this could not but mightily affect them generally with an Heroick Contempt of the World, and of the Body, and all Earthly things: The very *Doctrin*, *Promises*, and *Miracles*, with which they were confirmed, were apt, of their own Nature, to produce all this; but much more, being accompanied with such a Spirit and Power, as the Preaching of the Apostles and the Primitive Christians then was. And certainly they wanted nothing but Opportunity, even then in the Apostles times, to have settled in *Cœnobitical Societies*; which as soon as the common obstacle, the Persecutions, was removed, by the Providence of God, in raising *Constantine* to the Throne of the Empire, they presently began to do, first in *Egypt*, where, 'tis probable, were many descended from the *Recabites* and *Essenes*, and in no long time after in most other Parts. Concerning those in *Egypt* in his time, St. *John Chrysostome* gives us this Account: "Should any one come now to the "Deserts of *Egypt*, he would see all the Wilder-"ness altogether more excellent than a Paradise, "and innumerable Companies of Angels shining "in Mortal Bodies. For there is to be seen spread "over all that Region the Camp of Christ, and

"the

"the admirable Royal Flock, and the Conver-
"ſation of the Heavenly Powers illuſtriouſly
"ſhining upon Earth. And this you may ſee
"moſt ſplendid, not in MEN only, but alſo
"in WOMEN. Heaven it ſelf doth not ſo
"ſhine with various Conſtellations of Stars, as
"*Egypt* is beſet and illuſtrated with innumerable
"Convents of Monks and Virgins: But of this
more hereafter.

Theſe things being well conſidered, it will be very plain, 1. That they who have derived theſe Religious Inſtitutions from our Saviour and his Apoſtles, by their Example and Doctrin, and the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, had a good Foundation of Truth to maintain their Aſſertion. 2. That they who have raiſed ſuch Prejudice in the Minds of the People againſt ſuch Holy, Religious Societies in general, as to beget in them an Odium againſt all; if they did it in ſimplicity, and meerly through the Prejudice they themſelves had conceived from the Scandals of thoſe of their time, yet did they very raſhly and inconſiderately in ſo doing: but if they did it to temporize and ingratiate themſelves with Princes and Great Men, who had inriched themſelves with the Spoils of the Monaſteries, and the Revenues of the Church, they did very wickedly and impiouſly. We muſt not deny or queſtion the Juſtice of the Judgment of God upon them: but, Who are they by whom

the

the Righteous God doth usually execute such Judgments? And at this time we have great reason to take that for a Warning to our Selves. Were they cast out for their Laziness and Corruptions? What then have we to expect? Suppose ye that they were Sinners above all that have succeeded them? *I tell you, Nay; but except ye Repent ye shall all likewise perish.* God is able to restore them again: *The Vineyard shall be taken from you, and given to other Husband-men, who shall render him their Fruits in their Seasons.*

I Thought I had done here: For though I know many have written very bitterly against *Monks* and *Monkery*, I thought them not worth the looking into: because I believed the Truth, which I have asserted, will stand as an impregnable Rock against all their Blasts. Yet, at last, it coming into my mind, that an excellent Person of great Learning, Judgment, Piety and Candor, of this Church of *England*, had written something to like purpose, I thought fit to look into him; and finding, to my Sorrow for him, but great Satisfaction in this Case, how unworthy of himself, and of how little weight it is, which he hath said against them, I intended to have spared his Name, and to have passed it over with a short Note that it needeth not, nor deserved an Answer. But considering that that is only the way of the World; that we ought to sacrifice all Esteem of Men, whether our selves

or

or others, to the Truth, and to the Service of God, and of Men too, for their Admonition; and that the Holy Scriptures ſpare not to record the Failings of Holy Men; I reſolved to do the like. To be plain therefore, that Excellent Perſon, Mr. *Joſeph Meed*, having concluded *the Apoſtacy of the latter times*, fore-told, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. to be the Worſhip of Saints introduced into the Chriſtian Church, through the Hypocriſie of Lyars, forbidding to Marry, and commanding to abſtain from Meats; to make good his Interpretation of that firſt part of the Prediction, and make it compleat, concludes the latter part to be underſtood of *Monks*, that they were the chief Advancers of Saints Worſhip: And to prove this, he produceth the Teſtimony of *Chemnitius*, a known Adverſary to them, who lived about 1200 Years after the time he ſpeaks of; and *Eunapius*, (a known Enemy not only to them, but to all Chriſtians) whom he calls *wretched Catiffa, and damned Dog*. And why ſo? Why, becauſe he *blaſphemes the Saints and Servants of Chriſt, who loved not their Lives unto Death, the Duſt of whoſe Feet he was not worthy to lick up*. Competent Witneſſes indeed, and a ſpecial Teſtimony this: but he adds: *Yet may we make a ſhift to gather hence*, &c. But without Shifts we may ſee plainly to what Shifts his unadviſed and prepoſterous Zeal had reduced him, thus to expoſe the Weakneſs of the Cauſe he had undertaken,

taken, when all his Learning, Diligence, and Inquiry, and all Antiquity, could afford him no better Evidence; and to expose himself to the same Censure he had deservedly given to his own Witness. Had they been Monks and only Monks, who had been guilty of this, had it been fair to cast an Aspersion upon all? and, Was it fair, within a dozen Lines after, to print *Bishops* and *Monks* in different Characters, while both were under the same Circumstances? At this rate, What Calumnies might not be raised against the People of God in all Ages; the *Israelites*, the *Christians*, the very *Apostles* themselves, and such as pretend most of all to *Reformation*? The Devil hath always sowed his Tares, and most industriously amongst the best. But upon this Evidence, there is no question but the Accused will be acquitted by all impartial Judges.

As to what St. *Austin* saith of *some Hypocrites rambling about in the Habit of Monks*, it is very disingeniously, not to say dishonestly, alledged concerning *Monks in general*. But St *Austin*'s Mind concerning the *Monks of his time* is so plain in what follows, that I need say no more of it in this place. And for further answer to this Abuse of his Testimony, they who please may peruse it in his own Words upon *Ps.* 99. & 132. and *Ep.* 137. And the same may be said concerning *Gregory of Towers.* v. *Cassian. Coll.* 18. *c.* 16.

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He had unhappily concluded before, that those Words of *St. Paul* are a Description of *Monkery*; and when that Conceit was once fixed in his Mind, it presently set all his Parts and all his Learning to work to prove it to others; and gave easie admittance to all that might seem to favour it. Hence it was that he imagins *Abstaining from Meats* may comprehend *Renouncing of Possessions*. Nor could he otherwise have thought that the *Monks* did any more * forbid *Marriage*, than St. *Paul* himself did; nay, than our *Saviour* himself did: Nor have set himself (*Disc.* 28.) to derogate from that Obedience of the *Recabites* to the Institutions of their *Progenitor*, which *God* himself had so highly approved, and testified his Approbation of by so gracious a Promise: Nor have imagined that the Law of *Nazarism* was ever imposed upon any; much less that it is one of the things expressly named, which the Apostles decreed at the Council of *Jerusalem*, should not be imposed upon the *Gentiles*, who believed in Christ; or that *Act.* 21. 25, did prove any Prohibition of that, whereby the Apostles decreed the *Gentiles* should observe no such thing. There is a great difference between a Prohibition of Impositions, and a Prohibition of a free and voluntary Act. But how doth Prejudice blind Mens Minds! That a Man of his Parts, of his Learning, of his Judgment, Candor, and Generosity in asserting the Truth in other matters, should be so affected with

* *It was* Conc. Chalced. *did that*, c. 15. *to them, not to all.*

with a meer Imagination of his own, as to maintain that, to do such an Indignity to so glorious a part of the Christian Church, which St. *Gregory Nazianzen* calls *the most Choice and Wisest part of the Church*; and St. *Hierom*, *the Flower of the Church*, which produced so many Glorious Saints of so great Virtue, and adorned with such various and illustrious Graces; produced so many Bishops, innumerable, and amongst them the most illustrious Lights of the Church, both for Virtue and Learning; was so much respected not only by the People, but by the best of the Christian Emperours, and approved and favoured by the most Eminent Bishops of the Church, and hath so many Testimonies of their Excellence by Persons of the greatest Credit and Reputation, and deserved so well in many respects; that such a Man, for the sake of a Phansie of his own, should set up a *Chemnitius*, a prejudiced Adversary to them; and *Eusapius*, a Pagan Adversary to the Christians, against such a Cloud of Witnesses, and so wrest & strain the Holy Scriptures, and thereby so expose himself to just Censure, is one of the most remarkable Instances of the Mischief of Prejudice that I can think of: an Edifying instance to make all Men, good Men, learned Men, and wise Men, jealous of themselves, and cautious that they do not impose upon themselves; not to do God Service; for he needs no such Shifts, nor is at any time pleased with them.

OF

OF THE ESSEANS, OUT OF JOSEPHUS.

THERE are *Three Sects* of Philosophers amongst the *Jews*, [of long Continuance and Antiquity.] One, is that of the *Pharisees*; another, of the *Sadducees*; and the third, of the *Esseans*, which is the most Famous of the Three. The *Esseans* are *Jews* born, but live in the greatest *Union* together imaginable: They consider all *Pleasures*, as Vices that are to be avoided; and esteem *Continence* and Victory over *Passions*, as the greatest Virtues. They reject *Marriage*, and account other Mens Children put to them to be taught, whilst young, as their own Kinsmen; whom they diligently instruct in their Manners and Opinions; not

for that they condemn Marriage and Propagation of Mankind, but to avoid Womens Incontinence: for they think that none of them keep themſelves true to one Man. Alſo, they contemn *Riches*, and all things with them are *Common*, and no Man amongſt them is Richer than other. And they have a *Law* amongſt themſelves, that whoſoever will embrace their Sect, he muſt make his Goods Common: for ſo, neither any amongſt them ſeems abject for Poverty, nor any great for Riches; but they have, as it were, all equal Patrimonies, like Brethren.

"This is a Cuſtom worthy Admiration, and "ſuch as is not to be found amongſt any other, "either *Greeks*, or *Barbarians*, that make ac-"count of Vertue, which they have *practiſed* "*from all Antiquity*.

They account it a Shame *to anoint the Body* with Oyl; and if any Man, though againſt his Will, be anointed therewith, they uſe all diligence to wipe it away: And they account themſelves fine enough, if their Cloaths be white.

They have amongſt them *Stewards* to overſee all things for their Common Benefit; who are choſen from amongſt themſelves by a Common Conſult. Their *Revenue* is diſtributed according to the Need that every one hath. They have not one certain City, but are diſperſed in many

many *Cities*; and if any of their Sect, though a *Stranger*, come to them from another Place, they give him any thing they have, as if he were their ancient Acquaintance. In like manner they go boldly to thoſe whom they never, in their Lives, ſaw before, as though they were familiarly acquainted with them: And therefore when they take a Journey, they only arm themſelves againſt Thieves, and carry nothing with them elſe. In every City there is one appointed, whoſe Office is [to entertain Strangers] to *receive* and *lodge* thoſe of their Sect that come thither; and to ſee that they neither want Cloaths, nor any thing elſe neceſſary for them. All *Children* under Government, brought up by them, go apparelled alike; and they never change their *Apparel* nor Shoes, except they have worn out their firſt Apparel. Amongſt themſelves they neither Buy nor Sell; but every Man that hath any thing which another wanteth, giveth him it, and taketh that of him which himſelf needeth; yea, every one of them may take any thing he hath need of, from whom he pleaſeth, without any Change.

"Above all, towards God they are very Re-
"ligious. They attribute to Him the Govern-
"ment and Diſpoſition of all things. They ſay
"that the *Souls* of Men are immortal; and all
"the uttermoſt of their Endeavour and Delight
"is to maintain Juſtice and Equity. They ſend

"their *Offerings* unto the Temple, yet *Sacri-*
"*fice* they not with other Men, by reaſon
"they uſe more ſacred and different Ceremo-
"nies; for which they are ſecluded out of
"the Common Temple, and Sacrifice apart.
"Otherwiſe, they are Men of moſt compoſed
"Behaviour.

Before the Sun riſe they ſpeak of nothing but Holy things, and then they make certain *Vows* and *Prayers*, after the Cuſtom of their Countrey, as it were, praying that God would pleaſe to make it riſe upon the Earth.

After this, every one is diſmiſſed to *work*, or practice the *Art* he knoweth: And when every one hath diligently laboured till *Eleven* a Clock, they all *meet together* again, and being covered with Linnen Cloaths, they *waſh* their Bodies with cold Water; and having thus purged themſelves, they go to their Cells, into which no Man that is not of their Sect is admitted. And then they come to *the Refectory*, as into a Holy Temple, where, all ſitting down with *Silence*, there is ſet before every Man, in order, a Loaf of *Bread* and a little Meſs of *Pottage*, all of one ſort. Before they eat, a Prieſt giveth Thanks, and no Man may eat any Meat till his Prayer be made to God. Likewiſe, when Dinner is ended they pray again; for both before and after they give Thanks to God, the Giver of all: And then putting off the Apparel, as Sacred, they apply themſelves

themſelves to their *Work* till Evening. At *Supper* they do, as before, cauſing their Gueſts to ſup with them, if by fortune any come. Their Houſe is never troubled with Cries or Tumults; for every one is appointed to ſpeak in his turn; ſo that their Silence produceth reſpect in Strangers. The Cauſe of this Moderation, is, their continual Sobriety, and that every one is limited how much to eat or drink.

And although that in all other Matters they are ruled by their *Superiour*, yet in theſe two, to wit, *Compaſſionating* and *Helping*, they may do as they think good: for every one may, when he pleaſes, help thoſe whom he thinketh deſerve Help; and, when he pleaſeth, give Meat to them that are in Need. Yet may they not give any thing to their *Kindred*, without the Leave of their Superiour.

They take great care to ſuppreſs their *Anger*; they keep their *Promiſe*, and maintain *Peace*; and People account every Word they ſpeak of as much force, as if they had bound it with an *Oath*: And they ſhun *Oaths* worſe than Perjury; for they eſteem him a Lyar, who is not to be believed without he call God to witneſs. They ſtudy diligently *Ancient Writers*, chiefly gathering out of their Writings what is moſt convenient for the Soul and the Body: Out of them they learn Remedies for Diſeaſes, and the Virtues of Herbs, Stones, and Metals.

Thoſe who are deſirous *to be of their Order*, do not ſtrait-way converſe with them; but, for a Year before, live out of the College, and have the ſame Diet, a little Hatchet, and ſuch a Girdle as is before ſpoken of, and a white Garment: But, at the Years end, if they perceive ſuch a Perſon to be continent, they give him a Diet more agreeing with their own, and he is permitted to waſh himſelf in cold Water, to the end to purifie himſelf; yet he is not admitted in common amongſt them, till for Two Years more they have obſerved his Life and Manners: And, at laſt, when he is thought worthy, he is admitted to their common Company. But before he is received to the common Table, firſt he is *to proteſt* ſolemnly to honour and ſerve God with all his Heart; to obſerve Juſtice and Fidelity towards all Men; never willing to hurt any Man, nor injure any for another Man's Command; but always to hate the Wicked, and aſſiſt the Good; to keep his Faith to all, but eſpecially to his *Superiours*; becauſe they hold their Power from God. To which they add, that if he be put in Authority over others, he never will abuſe it, to the Prejudice of thoſe who are under him, and neither exceed the reſt in Apparel, nor any other ambitious Pomp; that he will always love the Truth, and ſeverely reprove Lyars: and that he will keep his Hands and Soul pure from all Theft and unjuſt Gain;

and

and that he will not conceal any Myſteries, or Secrets of their Religion, from his Companions, nor reveal them to any Strangers, although he ſhould be threaten'd thereto by Death. Adding moreover, that he will never deliver any Doctrin, ſave that which he hath received; and diligently preſerve the Books, as well as the Names, of thoſe from whom they received it. Theſe *Proteſtations* they oblige thoſe to take ſolemnly, who enter into their Order, to the end to fortifie them againſt all Vices.

Thoſe of the Society who tranſgreſs notoriouſly, they *thruſt out of their Company*: And who-ever is ſo puniſhed, for the moſt part dieth a miſerable Death; for, it being not lawful for him to eat with any Stranger, he is reduced to feed on Graſs, like Beaſts, and ſo he periſheth through Famine. For which cauſe oftentimes they are moved with Compaſſion to receive many into their Order again, when ready, by Famine, to yield up the Ghoſt; judging them to have endured Penance enough for their Offences, who, with Famine, were almoſt brought to Death's door. They are very ſevere and juſt in *their Judgments*; and to decide any Matter, there is never fewer of them than an Hundred, and that which is by them agreed upon is irrevocable. Next after God they reverence *their Law-giver*, inſomuch, that if any one revile him, they forthwith condemn him to Death.

They take it for a great Duty *to obey their Elders*, and what is appointed by many; ſo that if Ten of them ſit together, no Man of them muſt ſpeak, without he be licenſed thereto by Nine of the Company. They account it a great *Incivility* to be in the midſt of *the Aſſembly*, or on their right hand.

And they are more ſevere than any other *Jews* in obſerving the *Sabbath*; for they do not only abſtain from dreſſing Meat (which they dreſs the Evening before) that Day; but alſo, they may not remove any Veſſel out of its place, nor ſatisfie the Neceſſities of Nature.

Upon other Days they dig a Pit, a foot deep in the Ground, with the Hatchet which (as we before ſaid) every one, at his Entrance into their Order, hath given him; and then covering themſelves diligently with their Garment, as if they feared to be Irreverent to the Light of Heaven; in that Pit they eaſe themſelves, and then cover their Ordure with the Earth they took out of the Pit: and this they do in the moſt ſecret places. And though this purging of their Bodies be natural, yet do they, by waſhing, purifie themſelves after it, as after great Uncleanneſs.

Furthermore, amongſt themſelves they are divided into *Four Orders*, according to the time which they have continu'd this Exerciſe of Life: and they that are Juniors bear ſuch reſpect to their

their *Seniors*, that if they do but touch one of them, they are obliged to purifie themſelves, as though they had touched a Stranger.

They are *long liv'd*, ſo that moſt of them live an Hundred Years; which I judge is, by reaſon of their well-ordered Diet, and their Temperance.

They contemn *Adverſity*, and by Conſtancy and Fortitude triumph over Torments. They preferr an honourable Death before Life. The Wars which the *Jews* made againſt the *Romans* ſhew'd what invinſible *Courage* and Hardineſs they have in all things; for they ſuffered the Breaking of the Members of their Bodies, Fire and Sword, and all kind of Tortures, rather than be brought to ſpeak the leaſt Word againſt their Law-giver, or to eat Meats forbidden. They could not be forced to any of theſe, neither would they entreat the Torturers, nor ſhew any Sorrow amidſt their Torments. Yea, in the midſt of their Pains they ſcoffed at their Tormentors, and joyfully yielded up their Souls, as though they hoped to paſs to a better Life.

For it is an *Opinion* amongſt them, That the Body is mortal and corruptible, but the *Souls* remain ever immortal; and being of a moſt pure and etherial Subſtance, wrap themſelves in Bodies, as in Priſons, being drawn thereunto by ſome natural Inclination: But when they are delivered out of theſe carnal Bonds, then preſently,

ſently, as freed from a long Bondage, they joyfully mount into the Air. And of the Good Souls they ſay, as did the *Grecians*, that they live beyond the Ocean in a place of Pleaſure, where they are never moleſted with Rain, nor Snow, nor Heat; but have always a ſweet and pleaſant Air. But the Wicked Souls (as they ſay) go into a Place very tempeſtuous, where there is always Winter Weather, always Lamentations of thoſe who for ever are to be puniſhed. For I judge that the *Greeks* are of this Opinion, when they ſay there is an Iſle for the Virtuous, whom they call *Heroes* and *Half-Gods*; and that the Souls of the Wicked go to a Place in Hell, where it is feigned, that ſome are tormented, as *Syſiphus*, *Tantalus*, *Ixion*, and *Titius*. Thoſe *Eſſeans* alſo believe that they are created Immortal, that they may be induced to Vertue, and averted from Vice; that the Good are rendred better in this Life, by the Hope of being Happy after Death; and that the Wicked, who imagin they can hide their Evil Actions in this World, are puniſhed for them in the other with Eternal Torments. This is the *Eſſeans* Opinion, touching the Excellence of the Soul; from which we ſee very few of thoſe depart, who have once embraced it.

There are alſo ſome among them, who promiſe *to foretell things to come*; which Faculty is obtained as well by the Study of Holy Books and

and Ancient Prophecies, as by the Care they take of ſanctifying themſelves: And their *Predictions* ſeldom fail.

"They are, at leaſt, *Four Thouſand* in Num-"ber, who have neither *Wives* nor *Slaves*; "ſuppoſing that *Women* are the occaſion of "Injuſtice, and *Slaves* do cauſe Inſurrections; "and living apart by themſelves, they ſerve "one another; and chuſe out certain upright "Men among the Prieſts, to gather the Fruits "and Revenues of the Land, to the end they "may be maintained and nouriſhed thereby. "In a Word, they follow the ſame Courſe of "Life that they do, who are called *Fliſti* among "the *Danes*.

There is *another ſort of Eſſeans*, agreeing with the former, both in Apparel, Diet, and kind of Life, and Obſervance of the ſame Laws and Ordinances; only they differ in the Matter of *Marriage*: Affirming, that to abſtain from Marriage tends to aboliſh Man-kind. For (ſay they) if all Men ſhould follow this Opinion, preſently all Man-kind would periſh. Notwithſtanding, theſe People uſe ſuch Moderation, that for Three Years ſpace they obſerve the Women they intend to Marry; and then, if they appear ſound enough to bear Children, they Marry them. None of them lye with their Wives when they are with Child; to ſhew that they do not Marry to ſatisfie Luſt, but to have Children.

Children. When their Wives wash themselves they are covered with a Garment, as the Men are: And this is the Manner and Custom of this Sect.

OF THE ESSEANS, OUT OF PHILO.

'TIS a strange and lamentable thing to consider, what a continual *Faintness*, and how much *Listlessness*, we find in our selves to those things which we should prosecute with the greatest *Vigour*, as being the nearest *related to* us, and most *proper for* us: 'Tis this *Sluggishness* which putrefies all the Seeds of *Integrity*, that are in our Natures. On the contrary, we have an unsatiable *longing after* and *desire* of those things of which 'tis fitting we should be devested. Hence it is that both the *Sea* and *Land* are full of *Wealthy*, and *Vain-glorious*, and *Voluptuous* Men. Whereas the Number of *Wise*, and *Righteous*, and *Good* Men, is very small. But though that which is small is rare, yet it is not

not quite not exiſting in Nature. This both *Greece* and the *Barbarous* Countries can atteſt: For, in *Greece* did flouriſh thoſe who were truly call'd the *Seven Wiſe Men*, (beſides whom, others alſo, as is very probable, flouriſh'd, both before and ſince them) whoſe Memory, inaſmuch as they were the *Ancienter*, has not vaniſh'd; though, the Memory of the *later* of them, through the great Neglect of their *Contemporaries*, lies in Obſcurity. And in other Kingdoms were many *Ancients*, venerable both for their *Actions* and *Diſcourſes*, even numerous *Armies* (if I may ſo ſay, becauſe of the difficulties of Vertue) of Good and Excellent Men. Such among the *Perſians* are the *Magi*, who diving into the Works of Nature for the Knowledge of the Truth, are quietly, by much Leiſure and Opportunity, inſtructed in Sacred things; and do alſo teach others the Divine Virtues by clearer Demonſtrations. Such alſo among the *Indians* are the *Gymnoſophites*, who, beſides *Natural Philoſophy*, apply'd themſelves to *Moral* Philoſophy; and made their whole Life a Demonſtration of Vertue.

Neither does *Paleſtine* and *Syria* want their ſhare of *Excellent* Vertue; for there no ſmall part of a Numerous ſort of *Jews* does dwell: for there are ſome there which are called *Eſſeans*, in Number (as I think, for I cann't be exact) above *Four Thouſand*: They have their

their Denomination from *Holineſs*, in the *Greek* Dialect; for although they have the beſt and moſt *Worſhippers*, yet they ſacrifice no Creatures; but they are ambitious to prepare their Minds ſo, as that they may preſent their Thoughts in a fit Temper to be conſecrated, and as becomes Holy Men.

They dwell only in little *Villages*, avoiding *Cities* and great *Towns*, becauſe of the Immoralities of the Inhabitants of ſuch Places, being very ſenſible that *Souls* receive an incurable Wound from the *Converſation of ſuch* Men; juſt as our *Bodies* imbibe a *Diſeaſe* from *corruptive* Air. Some of them Till the Ground, and others follow ſuch Arts and Trades as are of uſe in Times of *Peace*, and by which they may be helpful to their Neighbours.

None of them hoard up Gold and Silver, or poſſeſs great Eſtates of Land out of Covetouſneſs of Revenues; but they are all contented with what will juſt ſupply the Neceſſities of Life. Theſe are the Perſons that, of *almoſt* all Men, keep themſelves *Moneyleſs* and *Eſtateleſs*. Theſe are very *Rich* by their Induſtry, and, indeed, more *Wealthy* by their wiſe Inſtitution, than 'tis poſſible that thoſe whoſe Minds ſtand in need of the Favour of Fortune ſhould be, or their own voluntary choice of only what is juſt neceſſary can make them Poor. Theſe are they who look upon a Temper, which makes

a Man

a Man need very little, and be ſoon ſatisfy'd, to be true Affluence, and a brave Eſtate; as indeed it is.

You cann't find a *Gun-Smith*, or a *Cutler*; not one that makes *Arrows*, or *Darts*, or *Javelins*, or *Daggers*, or a *Head-piece*, or a *Breaſt-plate*, or a *Shield*, or, indeed, any of thoſe Trades amongſt them which work upon *Arms*, or *any Inſtruments* which belong to *War*; or upon any of thoſe things which promote or tend to the Promotion of *Vice* in *Peace*. They own no Uſe to be in *Merchandiſe*, or *Tavierning*, or keeping *Publick Houſes*, or *Navigation*; for they avoid all Provocations of Covetouſneſs.

There is not one amongſt them a *Servant*; but they are all Free-Men, and wait upon one another mutually by turns; and they condemn *Maſters*, not only as *unjuſt* Perſons that lay Holineſs waſt; but as *impious* ones too, who deſtroy the Eſtabliſh'd *Law of Nature*; for ſhe, like a *common Mother*, hath brought us forth, and bred us all up alike, as *Natural Brethren*, having made us not only *Nominally*, but *Really* Brethren. But that treacherous Principle, *Covetouſneſs*, (which prompts us eaſily to overlook one another) has made a Breach in this *Univerſal Allyance*, and wrought in us *Strangeneſs* inſtead of *Familiarity*, and *Enmity* in the place of *Friendſhip*.

They reſign the *Logical* part of Philoſophy, as being not neceſſary in order to the Acquiſition

quiſition of Vertue, to *Word-Hunters*; and the *Phyſical* part of it, (ſo much only excepted as proves the *Exiſtence* of *God*, and the *Geneſis* of the *Univerſe*,) as that which exceeds the Comprehenſion of Humane Nature to thoſe who affect to prattle at random about *Sublime things*. But they take a great deal of pains in cultivating the *Moral* part thereof, making great uſe of ſome *Traditional* Laws of their *Fathers*, which encourage the Soul mightily in its proſecution of *Heroick Vertue*: and, indeed, they are ſuch Laws, as 'tis impoſſible for a Humane Soul to diſcern and think of without ſome *Divine* Inſtruction. Theſe they teach on *Seventh Days*, (beſides other times) with extraordinary Care, and in very excellent Methods; for the Seventh Day is reckoned *Holy* by their Laws; and in it they abſtain from all other Buſineſs, and go to their *Sacred* Places, (which they call *Synagogues*) where the *Young* Men ſit in their Orders, according to their different Ages, below the *Elders*, and hear attentively and reverently with all befitting Decency. When they are ſate, one of them takes the Books and reads; and then another of the moſt *Experienc'd* reads, paſſing by thoſe things which are not ſo practical and thorowly known: Part of their *Philoſophy* they communicate by *Signs*, [or *Riddles*,] [or *Hieroglyphicks*,] in Imitation of an ancient Cuſtom. The Subjects of their Inſtruction are, *Sanctity*, *Righteouſneſs*,

Righteouſneſs, *Oeconomy*, *Polity*, the *Knowledge* of *Helps* to, or *Hindrances* of the *Truth*, the Differences between things really *Good*, and really *Bad*, and things that are *Indifferent*; the *Choices* of things which ought to be choſen, and *Avoidances* of contrary things; making uſe herein of Three general *Terms* and *Canons*, (*viz.*) Φιλόθεον, or the *Love of God*; Φιλάρετον, or the *Love of Vertue*; and Φιλάνθρωπον, or the *Love of Man*. Of the firſt they give infinite Demonſtrations, Namely, a continued Series of *Chaſtity* through the whole Life, refraining from *Oaths* and *Lies*, and a ſteddy Belief that the *Deity* is the Authour of all Good things, but of nothing that is Evil. For Evidences of their *Love of Vertue*, (which was their Second general *Canon*) they preſcrib'd *Freedom* from *Love* of *Money*, *Freedom* from *Love* of *Glory*, and *Freedom* from *Love* of *Pleaſure*, *Continence*, and *Patience*; alſo *Needing* but *little*, *Simplicity*, *cheap* and *ſpare Diet*, *Freedom* from *Swellings* of the *Mind*, *regular Obedience*, and *Stability*, and all other *Habits* of the like Nature. For Indications of their *Love of Man*, (which was their third general *Canon*) they taught *Benevolence*, *Equality*, (which is better than the higheſt Pretences in Words) and having all things *Common*; of which it may not be unſeaſonable to ſpeak briefly.

In the first place then, you must know, no one has a *House* of his own, but what does as equally belong to all; for, because of their cohabiting together in Multitudes, their Houses are open to all Comers from other Parts, in case they are those that like the same way of Living. They have all one *Refectory*, common *Banks* and *Expences*, and common *Cloaths*, common *Victuals*, and common *Lodgings*. One common united *Roof*, and one and the same common *Diet* and *Table*, is what you can't find amongst any others [of them,] and perhaps no where else at all.

In the Evening, when they have received their *Hire*, they don't keep it to themselves, but bring it and cast it in, in the midst, before all, for the common Benefit of those who want to make use of it. Those also that are *Sick* are not neglected, because they are not able to help themselves, having *common Banks* laid up in readiness for the *Healing the Sick*, so that they may be at extraordinary Expence on such extraordinary Occasions without fear. They revere, honour, and take great Care of their *Elders*, maintaining and cherishing them in their *Old Age* by their Manual Labour, and many other means, in all Plenty and Security.

OF THE THERAPEUTS. OUT OF PHILO.

HAving ſpoken concerning the *Eſſeans*, who were zealous of, and ſtudiouſly exercis'd in an *Active* Life, more exactly than all, or, to ſpeak indeed more tolerably, than very many others: I come now, keeping cloſe to the thread of my Deſign, to ſpeak as much as is *true* and *pertinent* concerning thoſe who have embrac'd a *Contemplative* way of Living: And here I ſhall add nothing of my own to ſet off my *Narrative*, as *Poets* and *Orators*, whoſe ends of Writing are mean, and who are at a loſs for good and excellent Matter: 'Tis Truth, and that only, which I unfeignedly love and ſalute, how unwelcome ſoever this Method may be to the *Artificial* Speaker. But in my *Entrance* on this Subject, I find a great *Conteſt* with my ſelf; however, the Greatneſs of the Vertue of thoſe Men ought not to be the

Cauſe of Silence in thoſe, who don't think it fair that what is admirable ſhould be conceal'd.

What the Purpoſe of theſe *Philoſophers* was, their very Name diſcovers; for they are called *Therapeuts* and *Therapenteſſes*, from Θεραπεύειν, either from *Healing*, and more truly than other *Phyſicians*, ſince they profeſs a nobler *Medicinal* Art than that profeſs'd in the City; for that only heals *Bodies*, but this cures *Souls* of Diſeaſes very ſevere and hard to be cur'd; Souls beleagur'd and oppreſs'd with *Pleaſures* and *Luſts*, *Griefs* and *Fears*, *irregular Deſires*, and *Follies*, and *Iniquities*, and an infinite Multitude of other *Paſſions* and *Vices*: Or from *Worſhipping*, becauſe they have been taught by Nature and Holy Laws to worſhip the *Being* which is *Better* than *Good*, and *Simpler* than *One*, and *Ancienter* than *Unity*.

Thoſe that enter upon the *way of Living* which the *Therapeuts* uſe, don't do it out of Cuſtom, or at the Inſtigation of any Perſons; but becauſe they are raviſh'd with an *Heavenly* Love, and ſtruck powerfully by the Deity, and feel Spiritual Exultations of Joy in their Souls, and will not be at reſt till they ſee the Object they long for: Wherefore, becauſe through their deſire of an Immortal and Bleſſed Life, they reckon themſelves Dead to this Mortal Life, they *leave their Eſtates* to their Sons, or Daughters, or any other Relations, making them their Heirs cheerfully, and with a free Mind: Thoſe

of

of them which have not Relations, leave them to their Friends and Acquaintance. The *Greeks* celebrate *Anaxagoras* and *Democritus*, becauſe they, being ſmote with the *Love* of *Philoſophy*, let their Eſtates be devour'd by Sheep. I admire thoſe Men, becauſe they themſelves were above Riches: But, How much better were thoſe, who, not ſuffering their Eſtates to be devour'd by Cattle, apply'd a Remedy to the Needs of Men, and made the Indigent Rich? for that was an inconſiderable (not to ſay Mad) Act, for which *Greece* admir'd thoſe Men: But this is a ſober Cuſtom, which ſhews much Conſideration, Prudence, Humanity, and Sweetneſs of Diſpoſition. What can Enemies do more than devour and make the Countries of their Enemies bare of *Corn*, *Fodder*, and *Trees*, that being brought into the ſtraits of Neceſſity, they may yield. Juſt thus did *Democritus* ſerve his Kindred, contriving, as it were, with his own Hands Streights and Poverty for them, not deſignedly perhaps, but by not fore-caſting and having in his Eye the Benefit of others: How much better are theſe, though the Efforts of their Affections for Philoſophy were not leſs than his. Theſe preferr'd an extenſive Concern and Generoroſity of Mind before Contempt of their Friends, benefitting others with their Eſtates, and not making a corrupt uſe of them, that they might benefit both themſelves and others; others, by

ample Eſtates; themſelves, by *Philoſophizing*; becauſe the Cares of *Money* and *Lands* devour much Time: But 'tis an excellent thing to be frugal of Time, ſince, as the Phyſician *Hippocrates* ſaid, *Life is ſhort, but Art long*. But to proceed in our Narration.

When they quit their Eſtates, and are no longer caught by any Baits, they depart without ever turning back, and *leave their Brethren, Children, Wives, Parents, numerous Relations, friendly Intimacies* and *Engagements*, and the *Countries* in which they were bred and born; becauſe *Cuſtom* and *Familiarity* are very attracting, and have the greateſt Power to enſnare. And when they do thus, they do not remove into another City, like miſerable, unfortunate Servants, who, inſtead of Exchanging *Slavery* for *Liberty*, only exchange their Maſters; for, indeed, ſuch are they, who part with one Eſtate, to purchaſe another in ſome other City; for every City much inhabited (though it be govern'd by Good Laws) is full of unſpeakable Tumults and Hurries, which any one that is once led by Wiſdom can't away with: But they live and exerciſe themſelves without Walls, in Gardens and By-Fields, ſeeking after *Solitude*, not out of a moroſe affected Diſguſt againſt Men; but becauſe they are ſenſible Mixtures are unprofitable and hurtful, by reaſon of the Diſ-agreeableneſs of their Manners.

This

This ſort of Men are *in all parts* of the habitable World; and, indeed, 'twas but fitting that both *Greece* and the *Barbarous World* ſhould partake of this perfectly good Sect.

They abound in *Egypt* in every one of their Provinces, and eſpecially about *Alexandria*: But the *principal of them* retire, as to their own Countrey, *from all Parts*, to a *Colony* of *Therapeuts*, at a commodious Place about the Lake *Maria*, ſituate upon a little riſing Hill, and very convenient both for *Security*, and good *Temperature of Air*. As for Security, that Place is beſt which is ſurrounded with Neighbouring Villages and Cottages: And as for good, well-tempered Air, continual Gales, which proceed from a Lake that lies open to the Sea, and that part of the Sea which is nigh furniſh them with that; for the Sea ſends fine, thin Gales, and the Lake, which lies open to the Sea, thick, fat Gales; which two, ſo curiouſly mingled together, make a very Healthy Air.

The *Houſes* in which they live together are very mean and ſlight, and juſt ſerve for Defence againſt two very neceſſary things, the *Scorching* of the *Sun*, & the *cold Crudeneſs* of the *Air*: But they are not near together, as the Houſes in the Cities; for Neighbourhoods are troubleſome and ungrateful to thoſe who court Retirement: Neither are they far diſtant from each other; becauſe they love Communion and Society, toge-

ther, and that they may help one another if they ſhould be ſet upon by *Thieves*.

In every Houſe they have an *Oratory* to themſelves, call'd a *Sanctuary* and *Monaſtry*; in which, alone by themſelves, they celebrate the *Myſteries* of a *Sacred* Life, never bringing thither any ſuch thing as Meat, or Drink, or any other things elſe which are neceſſary for the Repairs of Nature's Decays; but only *Laws*, and *inſpired Oracles*, which were ſpoken by the *Prophets*, and *Hymns*, and other things by which *Knowledge* and *Piety* are encreaſed and perfected. They always preſerve an uninterrmitted *Remembrance of God*; ſo that even in their *Dreams* their Fancies form and preſent them with no other Images, but the Beauties of the Divine Powers. Hence many ſpeak out in their *Sleep*, and whilſt they are dreaming do interpret the venerable Decrees of the Holy Philoſophy. They are us'd to *Pray* twice every Day, *viz. Morning*, and *Evening*: When the Sun riſes, begging due *Compoſedneſs*, *Illumination*, and *Gentleneſs of Mind*, and that their *Mind* may be fill'd with *Heavenly Light*: When it ſets, they beg that the *Soul* may be quite eas'd of the *Tumour* and *Vanity* of the Senſes and Objects of Senſe, and that being fix'd in her own Sanhedrim and Conſultory, ſhe may trace the Tracts of Truth. All the ſpace of Time between the Morning and Evening, they give themſelves to Exercise;

Exercise: For reading the most *Holy Scriptures* they Philosophize, *Allegorizing* the Philosophy of their Ancestours: For they interpret the Composure of a plain literal Sense, as the Symbols [or Signatures] of a secret or concealed Nature, by probable Conjectures. They have also Compositions of Ancient Men, who, being the principal Promoters of this Sect, have left Monuments of this Model in their Allegories, which they make use of as certain *Archetypals*, imitating the Manner of their Design; so that they don't only contemplate. Moreover, they also make *Songs* and *Hymns* upon God, of all sorts of Measures and Tunes, to which they are obliged to prick the Graver sort of Notes. *Six Days* together every one of them apart Philosophize by themselves in their Cells, never going over the threshold, nor so much as peeping out; but on the *Seventh Days* they meet together in a common Body and sit down together in Order, according to their Age, in a very decent Posture, keeping their Hands out of sight; to wit, their right Hand between the Breast and their Chin, and the left Hand upon the Cavity of their right Side: The Eldest and Experteſt of them, when he is come, discourses to them with a fix'd Eye, and a steddy Voice, with Reasoning and Wisdom, not affecting out of Ostentation Excellency in Words, like *Orators* and *Sophisters*; but with great Searchingness of Thought, and

Accuracy

Accuracy of Interpretation, which does not ſit upon the tip of the Ears, but by hearing goes into the Soul, and continues its fix'd Dwelling-Place there. All the reſt hear the Exhortation with Silence, ſignifying their Approbation only by Motions of their Eye or Head.

The common *Temple*, in which they meet together on *Seventh Days*, has Two Incloſures; one being alotted for the *Men*, call'd Ἀνδρῶν; the other for *Women*, call'd γυναικωνῖτις; for the Women ordinarily hear together with them, having the ſame Emulation and Purpoſe. The Wall which parts the Incloſures is built about three or four Cubits high from the Pavement, like a Fortreſs, being higher up open to the top. By this Contrivance the Female Sex preſerve that Modeſty which becomes them, and hear well enough as they ſit in the Auditory, becauſe nothing hinders the Voice of the Speaker.

They firſt lay *Temperance* in the Soul, as it were for a Foundation, and raiſe a Superſtructure of other Vertues upon that. Not one of them uſes any Meat or Drink before Sun-ſet; for they reckon the Exerciſe of Philoſophy worthy of the Day; but Bodily Neceſſities to belong to Darkneſs: Wherefore, they beſtow their Days upon that, and ſome ſmall part of the Night upon theſe. Some of them having a peculiar Deſire after Knowledge raiſed in them, forget to *Eat* for Three Days together: And others

are

are ſo luxuriouſly and deliciouſly cheered and feaſted by Wiſdom, ſupplying them liberally with Sentiments, that they withſtand their Appetites double that time, and hardly taſte the leaſt neceſſary Food for Six Days together, being us'd (as they ſay of a certain ſort of *Graſhoppers*) to be fed by Air; for their Singing makes Want very eaſie.

And becauſe they reckon the *Seventh Day* all Holy and all Feſtival, they vouchſafe it a peculiar Honour; for after the Care of the Soul, they anoint the Body alſo, allowing it Relaxation, juſt as they do their Cattle, from continual Toyl. They *eat* nothing that is coſtly, but feed upon *cheap* Bread, and Salt: Thoſe of them that live *deliciouſly*, dreſs it with Hyſſop, Their *Drink* is Spring-Water. Thus they appeaſe thoſe Two *Tyranneſſes*, Hunger and Thirſt, which Nature hath placed over [or under] the Mortal kind, bringing nothing to allure them, but only ſuch things as are needful, without which 'tis not poſſible to live. For this Reaſon they eat that they may not be hungry, and drink that they may not thirſt; but they avoid *Fulneſs* and *Satiety*, as the Enemy and Traitour both of Soul and Body.

Covering being of Two kinds, namely, *Cloaths*, and a *Dwelling-Place*; (having acquainted you that their *Dwellings* are mean, made without Art, of what-ever comes to hand, and only for uſe)

uſe) I come now to acquaint you, that their *Raiment* alſo is very mean, worn only for Defence againſt Cold and Heat: They have a *thick Cloak* over ſome *rough Skin* or other, in Winter; and in Summer, a lighter ſhort Garment over their Shoulder, or *Linnen*. They alſo exerciſe themſelves to a perfect Freedom from all Arrogance and Vanity, knowing very well that Falſhood is the beginning of Tumour, and that Truth is the Source of the Avoidance of vain Pomp and Oſtentation; and that both theſe have the Nature of their different Spring and Fountain; for from Falſhood flow numerous and divers *Idea's* [or kinds] of Evils; but from Truth, a great Abundance of both Humane and Divine Goods.

The manner of their *Feaſting* is thus; For Seven Weeks together they aſſemble together, which they do not only out of Reſpect to the Number *Seven*, but alſo to the Power of it; for they know it to be a chaſt and Virgin Number. This Feſtival is a Preparatory to the greateſt Feaſt, (*viz. Pentecoſt*,) ſo called for its belonging to the Number *Fifty*, which is the moſt Holy and Natural Number, becauſe of the Power of a right-angled Triangle, which is the Principle of the Production of all things. When they are met together, array'd in White, as ſoon as the *Ephemereuts* (for that is the Name they call their Beadles by) give the Sign, all of

of them, before they ſit down to eat, ſtanding in a very decent Order, with all Gravity, do, with their Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven, (their Eyes, becauſe they have been taught to ſee things ſo worthy of Veneration; their Hands, to ſignifie that they are not guilty of Eating any Food before, out of pretence of Neceſſity) pray to God that their Banquetting may pleaſe Him, and be according to his Mind, or [according to underſtanding.] The *Seniors* ſit down according to their *Admiſſions*; for they don't reckon thoſe who have liv'd many Years, and are very Ancient, the Seniors there; but, on the contrary, they look upon them as Young Children, if they have but lately been enamour'd with that way of Living; but they count thoſe who began betime, in the Flower of their Age, to betake themſelves to the *Contemplative* part of Philoſophy (which, indeed, is the beſt and Divineſt part) their Seniors, though their Youth be not yet expir'd. The *Women* alſo are at the Feaſt with them, many of which are very Ancient, and Virgins out of pure Love to *Purity*, not out of Neceſſity, as ſome of the Prieſteſſes amongſt the *Greeks*, who live ſo upon that Account, rather than out of free Choice: No; theſe live ſo becauſe of a true Zeal for, and deſire of Wiſdom; for, having a fervent deſire to live by Wiſdom, they make no account of Bodily Pleaſures; neither do they deſire *Mortal*,

but

but *Immortal* Off-ſprings, which only a Soul that truly loves God is able to bring forth out of its ſelf; for 'tis God who has ſhed into it the *Intellectual* Rayes of the *Father*, by which 'twill be able to contemplate the Decrees of Wiſdom. When they ſit together, the Men ſit on the Right hand, and the Women on the Left. If any one ſuppoſes that ſofter *Seats* than ordinary (though not ſo coſtly) were prepared for ſuch Noble, Virtuous Exerciſers of Vertue; let him know, that they have cheap ſort of Carpets made of ſome Leaves and Barks of Trees that grow there, on which they lean a little; for they remit ſomething of the hard way of Living that the *Lacedæmonians* uſe; though, in all reſpects, they ſtudy *Frugality*, and have a ſtrong *Antipathy* againſt the *Philtres* of Pleaſure. They are not waited upon by *Slaves*; for they look upon the keeping of Servants to be a Cuſtom againſt Nature; for ſhe made and brought forth all Men free. But the Iniquity and unreaſonable Covetings of thoſe who have affected *Inequality*, the Ring-leader of all Miſchief, have brought Camps into the World, and ſet the ſtronger Men on Fire, to exert their Strength againſt the Weak. Here, as I ſaid, is no Servant; but Free-Men give all neceſſary Attendance, which they do heartily, and with all readineſs, even to the Prevention of Requeſt; for the Juniors of the Company, which are appointed from

from Meal to Meal, do, with all Diligence, ſerve thoſe who have arrived to a great pitch of Vertue, (juſt as Natural Sons do, with great Pleaſure and Emulation, ſerve their Parents) reckoning theſe their common Parents to be nearer related to them than their Parents by Blood, ſince nothing is nearer than *Integrity* to thoſe who have right Minds. Thoſe that wait come with their Garments looſe about them, leſt there ſhould be the leaſt Appearance of Servility amongſt them at this Feaſt. I know ſome will laugh at the Hearing of this; but they are ſuch as do thoſe things for which they ought to weep and lament. At thoſe Feaſts no *Wine* is brought in, but only very clear *Water*; cold Water for the moſt, and warm Water for the Tendereſt of the Old Men. Their Table is pure from all *Bloody Creatures*; Loaves are their *Meat*, and Salt is their *Sauce*. The moſt dainty of them, indeed, make it more palatable with *Hyſſop*; for Right Reaſon charges them, like *Prieſts*, to ſacrifice *Sacrifices* without Wine, and to live upon them; for *Wine* is an incentive of Folly, and *chargable Diſhes* provoke Luſt, which is the moſt Inſatiable of all Beaſts. And ſo much for the Firſt part.

After the Gueſts are ſat in the Orders forementioned, the *Waiters* do ſtand decently in Order, ready to ſerve. There is no *Drink* brought, but every one calls for it as he wants it;

it; and, which is more than any thing already mentioned, no one dares *Belch*, or fetch his Breath indecently: But ſome body either offers a Query upon ſome place of the *Holy Scriptures*, or ſolves ſomething propos'd by another without any Solicitude about the manner of the Solution; for not one amongſt them deſires Fame by fine *Speaking*: But every one loves to ſee another more exact; and when they ſee him ſo, not to envy him, though they are not ſo accute themſelves. They have all the like Deſire to learn. Sometimes one of them takes more time when he teaches, repeating and dwelling upon what he ſays, that he may imprint his Notions on their Souls; for, many times, the Mind of the Auditors being not able to keep pace with the Interpretation of one that ſpeaks too cloſely, or too faſt, falls ſhort of comprehending what is ſaid; the reſt look with their Faces upright upon him who ſpeaks, in one and the ſame Poſture, and give Notice of their Underſtanding and Comprehending what they hear by a Nod, or a Look. They diſcover their Commendation by the continued Cheerfulneſs of their Aſpect; but a Doubt is ſignify'd by a ſtiller Motion of the Head, and their Right hand's little Finger. The *Juniors* alſo that wait give no leſs Attention than thoſe that ſit at Table. Their Expoſitions of the *Holy Scriptures* are Allegorical Hints; for the whole Conſtitution of their Law ſeems to them

them like an Animal; in which the literal Expressions, are the Body; and the invisible Sense infolded in the Words, the Mind; wherein the Reasonable Soul begins distinctly to consider the Properties thereof, as through the Perspective of the Names, after it (having beheld the admirable Beauties of the Notions, and unveil'd the Symbols) has brought to light the deeper [or more recondite] Sense to those, who, from a small hint, are capable of tracing obscure Truths by the Light of those that are manifest. After the *President* seems to have made a sufficient Discourse, so as that his *Applications* successfully hit what he aim'd at, and the *Attention* of the Auditours perceive his meaning, they all give an *Humm*, thereby signifying that they are pleased, and choose, for the future, to put his Advice in Execution.

After this, he rises up, and sings an *Hymn* in Praise of God, which is either of his own, or some ancient Poets composure; for their Poets have left them Measures and Songs of all sorts; μέλη τρίμετρα, *Trimetres*; προσόδια, *Introits*, [or *Processional*;] ὕμνοι, *Laudatory*; παρασπόνδεια, *Sacrifical*; παραβώμια, *Altar-Songs*; στάσιμα, *Stationary*; ἐφύμνα, *Choiral* with *Stanza's* of various Measures; some of which are us'd with their Faces turn'd from, and others with their Faces turn'd towards the Altar: After whom the others, according to their Orders, in a very decent manner,

do also sing, the rest hearing with deep Silence, except when the last Lines, or the short *after-Hymns*, are to be sung; for then they all sing out, both Men and Women.

When every Precentor has finish'd his Hymn, the Juniors bring in the Table, as was just above-mentioned; upon which they have all their *Holy Loaf* of Bread leavened with Salt and Hyssop mingled together. They have Hyssop in the *Half-Loaf*, out of Reverence to their *Holy Table* in the Church-Porch; for on this Table they have Loaves and Salt without Sauces; the Loaves unleaven'd, and the Salt unmix'd: For 'twas fitting that the simplest and purest things should be allotted to the Principal part of the *Sacra*, as the Reward of the Ministration; and that others should imitate the same, and abstain from those Loaves, that their betters may have them as their Prerogative.

After *Supper*, they keep a *Holy Vigil* all Night. They keep the *Vigil* thus: They all rise together, and in the middle of the Hall make two Choirs; one of Men, and the other of Women; each choosing their Eminentest person for *Musick* for a Precentor; and then they sing some Hymns made in the Praise of God, with variety of Measures and Stanza's, sometimes singing all together, and sometimes alternately, with peculiar Gestures, and dancing about, as those who are struck with a *Divine Fury*. Sometimes they sing

ſing *Proceſſional*, ſometimes *Stational* Hymns, altering their Poſtures with reſpect to the *Altar*, as they ſee occaſion: Then when each of them has been ſeparately and by themſelves entertain'd, juſt as though they had been drinking ſome Divine Wine, they both mingle together, and make one Choir, in imitation of the Choir at the *Red-Sea*, upon the account of the *Miracles* wrought there, which exceeded the Thought and Hope of the *Iſraelites*, and made them all in one Company exult, as though they were beſide themſelves, and ſing *Euchariſtical* Hymns to God their Deliverer; the *Prophet Moſes*, being the *Mens Precentor*; and *Miram* the *Propheteſs*, *Precentreſs* to the *Women*: The Choir of the *Therapeuts* and *Therapeuteſſes*, is juſt like it, ſinging with different Notes; for the treeble Voice of the Women mingled with the Baſe of the Men, makes a lovely and truly Muſical Harmony. Their *Thoughts* are truly fine, their *Words* are fine, and their *Choiriſters* are comely: *in ſhort*, the Thoughts, the Expreſſions, and Choiriſters, are all pious and devout. After they have continu'd their Holy Tranſport till the Morning, they don't feel their Heads diſorder'd, or their Eyes heavy; but they are more wakeful than they came; and as ſoon as they ſee the Sun riſe, with their Eyes and their whole Body towards the Eaſt, and their Hands lifted up towards Heaven, they pray for *Lightſomneſs of Mind*, and *Truth*, and *Ratio-*

nal Quick-sightedness. After these Prayers every one of them retreat to their own *Oratories*, to cultivate and traffick in their usual Philosophy.

Since therefore the *Therapeuts* have embrac'd the *Theory* of Nature, and liv'd together with one *Soul*, and were *Citizens* both of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and were truly commended and conformed to the Father and Maker of all things by *Vertue*, which procur'd them that Friendship which is the truest Honour; do thou, by applying thy Mind to a Prosecution of Vertue, which is better than all Prosperity, reach the Top and Perfection of Felicity.

The

The Judgment and Obſervations of Euſebius, *Biſhop of* Cæſarea, (*in his* Eccl. Hiſt. *l.* 2. *c.* 16.) *and other* Ancient Writers, *concerning* Philo's *Book of the* Therapeuts, *and that they were* Chriſtians.

MARK (the Evangeliſt) going into *Egypt*, is reported to have been the firſt Publiſher there of the *Goſpel* he had written, and to have ſettled *Churches* in the very City of *Alexandria*. And furthermore, that ſo great a Multitude both of Men and Women, who there embraced the Faith of *Chriſt*, profeſſed from the very beginning ſo ſevere and ſo Philoſophical a *Courſe of Live*, that *Philo* vouchſafed in his Writings to relate their *Converſe*, their *Aſſemblies*, their *Eating* and *Drinking* together, and their whole *manner of Living*.

It is reported that this *Philo*, in the times of *Claudius*, came to be familiarly acquainted with *Peter* at *Rome*, who then Preached the Word of God there: neither is this unlikely. For that Work of his, of which we speak, being by him elaborated a long time after, does manifestly contain all the *Ecclesiastical Rules* which are to this present observed among us. And seeing he describes evidently the *Lives* of the *Ascetæ* amongst us, he does make it sufficiently perspicuous that he did not only see, but also very much approve of and admire the Apostolical Men of his time, who being, as it is probable, originally *Jews*, upon that account did then observe, in a great measure, the *Judaical* Rites and Customs.

First of all therefore, in that Book which he intituled, *Of Contemplative Life*; or, *Of Suppliants*, having professed that he would insert nothing disagreeable to Truth, or of his own Head into that Account which he was about to give, he says, That the Men were called *Therapeutæ*, and the Women that were conversant among them *Therapeutriæ*: And he adjoyns the reason of that Appellation, either because, like *Physicians*, they healed the Minds of those that resorted to them, curing them of their vicious Affections; or because they worshipped the *Deity* with a pure and sincere Service and Adoration.

Further,

Further, whether *Philo* himſelf gave them this Name, deviſing an Appellation agreeable to the Manners and Diſpoſitions of Men; or whether they were really ſo called from the beginning, the Name of *Chriſtians* not being every where ſpread and diffuſed, it is not neceſſary poſitively to affirm or contend about it. But he atteſts that, in the firſt place, they part with their Goods, ſaying, "That as ſoon as they "betake themſelves to this courſe of Philoſo-"phizing, they put over their Wealth and "Poſſeſſions to their Relations. Then, caſting "away all Care of Wordly matters, they leave "the Cities, and make their Abode in Gardens "and ſolitary Places; well knowing the Con-"verſing with Men of a different and diſagree-"ing Perſwaſion to be unprofitable and hurtful. Which thing the Chriſtians of that time ſeem to me to have inſtituted out of a generous and moſt fervent Ardour of Faith, endeavouring to emulate the Prophetical ſevere Courſe of Life. Therefore in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles (which contain nothing but the perfect Truth) it is ſhewed, That all the Diſciples of the Apoſtles ſelling their Poſſeſſions and Goods, divided the Price among the Brethren, according as every one had need, that ſo there might not be any indigent Perſon amongſt them. For as the Word ſays, *As many as were Poſſeſſors of Lands or Houſes ſold them, and brought the Prices of the*

things that were ſold and laid them down at the Apoſtles feet: and Diſtribution was made unto every Man according as he had Need.

After *Philo* has atteſted the very ſame things with theſe, of the *Therapeutæ*, he adds thus much farther concerning them, word for word, ſaying, "This ſort of Men, indeed, is diffuſed "far and wide over the whole World. For it "was requiſite that both *Greeks* and *Barbarians* "ſhould be partakers of ſo excellent a Benefit. "*Egypt* eſpecially is full of them, throughout all "its Diviſions; but moſt of all about *Alexan-* "*dria*. But from all places, the principal of "them retire themſelves into a moſt commo- "dious place above the Lake *Maria*, ſituate upon "a little riſing Hill, excellently well ſeated both "for Wholſomeneſs of Air, and Conveniency of "Abiding, as into the Country of the *Therapeutæ*.

Then, after he has deſcribed their *Houſes*, after what manner they were built, he ſpeaks thus of the *Churches* they have in divers Places. "In every Houſe there is a Chappel, called a "*Semnæum*, and *Monaſterium*, in which, alone "by themſelves, they perform the Myſteries of "an *Holy Life*. They bring in thither "neither Meat nor Drink, nor any Corporal "Proviſions or Neceſſaries; but only the Law, "and the divine Oracles of the Prophets, and "Hymns, and ſuch like; whereby Knowledge "and Piety are increaſed and perfected.

And

And a little while after, he says: "All the "interval of time, from Sun rising to the Even-"ing, they spend in *Meditations of Philosophy*; "For reading the Holy Scriptures, they Philo-"sophize after their Countrey way, and expound "Allegorically. For they suppose that the "Words are only Notes and Marks of some "things of a Mystical Nature, which are to be "explained Figuratively. They have *Writings* "of some ancient Persons, who have been here-"tofore famous Leaders of their Sect, and have "left them many Monuments of that Learning, "which consists in dark and secret Expressions, "which they, using as original Platforms, do "imitate thereby that Course of Study.

These, certainly, seem to be the Words of such a Man as had heard some of our Religion expounding the Holy Scriptures. And it is very likely that the Writings of those ancient Persons, which he says they had, were the Gospels and Writings of the Apostles, and certain Expositions of the ancient Prophets, of which sort many are contained both in other Epistles of *Paul*, and also in that written to the *Hebrews*.

Afterwards *Philo* thus writeth concerning the *New Psalms* composed by them. "They do not "only spend their time in Contemplation, but "they compose Songs and Hymns to the Praise "of God of all sorts of Meeter and Musical Verse, "which they write in grave and seemly Rhymes.

He

He relates many other things of them in that Book I mentioned: But I judged these fittest to be selected and pickt out, in which certain Marks of *Church Discipline* are proposed.

But if any one should think what *Philo* here says to be in no wise proper to the Evangelical Politie, but may be adapted to others besides those I have mentioned; he will certainly be convinced by *Philo*'s following Words; in which, if he shall duly weigh the Matter, he will receive a most undoubted Testimony of this thing. Now he writes thus: "Having first laid Temperance, as a certain foundation, they build thereupon the other Virtues. For none of them takes either Meat or Drink before Sunset: for they hold it requisite to spend the Day in the Study of Philosophy, and the Night in making necessary Provision for the Body. Therefore they allot the whole Day to study, but allow a very small portion of the Night for Bodily Provision. Some of them forget to eat for Three Days together, so great is the desire of Knowledge that possesses them. But some others of them are so well pleased with, and feed so richly and deliciously upon the Banquets of Wisdom, which sets before them wholsome Precepts, as a most sumptuous Feast, that they are wont scarce to tast any necessary Food in twice that space, *to wit*, in Six Days time.

We

We suppose these Words of *Philo* to be evidently, and without all doubt, spoken concerning those of our Religion. But if, after all this, any one shall still persist in a peremptory denyal of these things; he will, at length, recede from his obstinate difficulty of Belief, being perswaded to submit to such manifest Demonstrations as are no where to be found but in the Christian Religion, composed according to the Rule of the Gospel.

Philo says further therefore, "That among "these Men, *of whom we speak*, there are certain "Women conversant, many of which continue "Virgins being old; not out of Necessity, like "some of those amongst the *Grecian* Priests, but "voluntarily preserving their Chastity out of an "ardent Affection to and Desire of Wisdom; in "the Embraces and Familiarity whereof they "earnestly affect to spend their Lives; having "despised all Bodily Pleasures, and desiring earnestly not a Mortal Issue, but an Immortal; "which that Mind only that loves, and is beloved "of God, can of it self bring forth.

After many other Expressions, he speaks yet more plainly thus; "Their Expositions of *Holy* "*Writ* are figurative, by way of Allegories. "For these Men suppose the whole Law to be "like a Living Creature; the bare Words where-"of are, as it were the Body, and the invisible "Sense, that lies hid under the Words, resembles

"the

"the Soul. Which ſence this Sect have and do "make it their Religion earneſtly to ſearch into "and contemplate, beholding in the Words, as "in a Glaſs, the admirable beauty of the Mean-"ing.

There is no neceſſity of adding farther here an account of their *Aſſemblies*, of the *diſtinct Apartments* of their Men and Women, and of their *ſeveral Studies* and *Holy Exerciſes*, now in uſe amongſt us, more eſpecially about the Feaſt of our *Lord's Paſſion*, when we are wont to practiſe them in Faſtings, Watchings, and attentive Reading of Holy Scriptures. All which the Man we have ſo often mentioned, does relate in his Writings accurately, after the ſame manner in which we only at this time obſerve them: Eſpecially he mentions the *Vigils* of the great Solemnity, the *Holy Exerciſes* therein, and the *Hymns* we are wont to recite. And how, when one has begun to ſing a Pſalm harmoniouſly and gravely, the reſt, ſilently hearkening, do after ſing out in *Chorus*, the latter parts only of the Verſes. "And how throughout "thoſe Days, lying in Straw upon the Ground, "they wholly abſtain from Wine, (*as he has "ſaid in theſe expreſs Words*) and eat nothing "that has Blood in it: *Water* is their only "Drink, and their Food is *Bread* with *Salt* and "*Hyſſop*.

Farther

Farther he describes the Order and Degrees of their *Governours, to wit,* those who perform the Ecclesiastical Offices; then the Ministrations of the *Deacons*; and, lastly, the *Episcopal Presidency* over all. He that desires to know these things more accurately, may be therein informed from the fore-mentioned History of *Philo.*

It is therefore apparently evident to every one, that *Philo* writing thus, did mean thereby those first Preachers of the *Evangelical Doctrin* and *Discipline*, at the beginning delivered by the Apostles.

Epiphanius, *Bishop of* Cyprus, *concerning the same,* Har. 29. § 5.

HAving *said that the* Christians *were at first called* Nazarens, *as* Act. 24. 5. 2. 22. *and for some time* Jesseans, *whether from the Name of* Jesse, *or from the Name of our Lord* Jesus, *because they were his Disciples, he adds:* But thou may'st find this in the Writings of PHILO, in the Book by him intituled, *Of the Jesseans,* who describing their Politie and Commenda-

tions,

tions, and recounting their Monaſtries near about the Lake *Maria*, he relates it of no other than of *Chriſtians*. For he, when he was in that Region, called *Mariotis*, and was by them themſelves conducted to the Monaſtries of that place, got much Profit by it. For, being there in the Days of *Eaſter*, he ſaw both their Lives, and how ſome lived without Eating all the Holy Week of *Eaſter*, ſome Two Days, and ſome until the Evening. But all theſe things were done by this Man for the treating of the Subject concerning the *Faith* and *Manners* of the Chriſtians.

St. Hierom *concerning the ſame, in his Book* de Scriptoribus Eccleſiaſticis.

PHILO the *Jew*, Born at *Alexandria*, of the Race of the *Prieſts*, is therefore by us placed among the *Eccleſiaſtical Writers*, becauſe writing a Book of the firſt Church of *Mark* the Evangeliſt at *Alexandria*, he diſcourſeth in Praiſe of our People, (the Chriſtians there) recounting that they were not only there, but alſo in many

many other Provinces, and calling their Habitations Monastries. Whence it appears, that such was the Church of the first Believers in Christ, as now the Monks endeavour and desire to be, that nothing may be any ones own, *that is*, that none claim a Propriety in any thing, that there be none amongst them Rich, none Poor, their Patrimonies be divided among those who need; that they all attend to Prayer, and Psalms, also to Doctrin, and to Continence, such as *Luke* relates were the first Believers at *Hierusalem*. It is reported, that under *Caius Caligula* he was in some Danger at *Rome*, whither he was sent Legate for his Nation: that when he came a second time to *Claudius*, he there, in the same City, spake with the Apostle *Peter*, and held Friendship with him; and for this Cause also wrote in Praise of the Followers of *Mark*, the Disciple of *Peter* at *Alexandria*.

A little after, recounting the Works of Philo, *among the rest, he puts in* One Book concerning the Lives of our People, *that is*, concerning Apostolick Men, of which we have spoken before, which he intituled, Περὶ βίων Θεωρητικῶν ἤτοι, *viz.* because they did contemplate Heavenly things, and prayed continually.

Johannes

Johannes Caſſianus *concerning the ſame, lib.* 2. de Inſtitut. *cap.* 5.

IN the Beginning of the Faith there were indeed but few, but thoſe moſt approved Perſons, reckoned under the Denomination of Monks, who, as from *Mark* the Evangeliſt, of Bleſſed Memory, who firſt preſided Biſhop in the City of *Alexandria*, they received their Rule of Living, did not only retain thoſe Great things, which we read in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, that the Church, or Crowd of Believers, at firſt made ſo famous, *viz.*

The Multitude of them, who believed, were of one Heart, and of one Soul; neither ſaid any of them that ought of the things, which he poſſeſſed, were his own; but they had all things Common. [*Neither was there any among them that lacked:*] *for as many as were Poſſeſſors of Land or Houſes, ſold them, and brought the Prices of the things which were ſold, and laid them down at the Feet of the Apoſtles; and Diſtribution was made unto every Man according as he had need.*

But they even built up more ſublime things upon them. For retiring into the moſt ſecret parts of the Suburbs, they lead a Life of ſo great Rigour

Rigour of Abſtinence, that ſo ſevere a Profeſſion of Life was an amazement to others. For they applied themſelves with ſo much Fervour to the Reading of the Divine Scriptures, and to Prayer, and to the Work of their Hands, Day and Night, that neither the Appetite, or Memory of Meat, unleſs after two or three Days, did interrupt them by Hunger of the Body. And they received Meat and Drink, not as what they deſired, but what was neceſſary, and not that neither before Sun-ſet, that they might conjoyn the time of Light with the Studies of Spiritual Meditations, but the Care of the Body to the Night; and other things did they effect more ſublime than theſe: concerning which, he who is not ſufficiently informed by the People of the Countrey, may ſatisfie himſelf in the *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*.

Sozomen *concerning the ſame,* 1 Hiſt. Eccl. *c.* 12.

Having ſpoken of the Glory of the Chriſtian Religion, *by reaſon of the Virtue of its Profeſſors, and of the Confeſſors then living, and of the Famous Biſhop* Spiridion, *he adds:* But

moſt of all did they illuſtrate the Church with their Virtues, and propagated the Chriſtian Doctrin, who exerciſed the Monaſtick Diſcipline. For this kind of PHILOSOPHY coming from God, with the greateſt Benefit to Men, deſpiſeth indeed many *Sciences*, and the Artifice of Logick as a matter of Curioſity, and by which the Exerciſe of better things is ſupplanted; nor is any thing of Advantage for a right kind of Life conferred by it; and with a more *natural Prudence*, void of Curioſity, teacheth thoſe things which remove wholly Vitiouſneſs, and effect better things; but the Middle things between Vertue and Vice it reputes not among the Good; but delights in only Good things, and holds him for *an ill Man*, who, although he abſtains from Evil, yet doth no Good. For it doth not make ſhew, but exerciſeth Vertue, and makes no account of the *Glory*, which is of Men, reſiſting the Affections of the Mind with great Fortitude; nor doth it yield to the Neceſſities of Nature, nor ſtoop to the Infirmities of the Body; but having obtain'd the Powers of a Divine Mind, it looks perpetually at the Creator of all, whom it worſhippeth Day and Night, and appeaſeth with Prayers and Supplications: But having begun a pure Religion, with Purity of Mind, and the Exerciſe of Good Deeds, it makes light of Waſhings, and ſuch like [Purifications.] For it

it judgeth Sins only to be Impurities, and being Conquerour of those things which happen from without, and, as I may so say, Mistress of all, is not diverted from her purpose, neither by the Confusion of those things which fill the Lives of Mortals, nor by any Necessity; neither is it provoked with Contumelies; nor being injured, doth it revenge it self; nor doth it sink, being pressed either with Sickness, or with Penury of Necessaries; but doth rather triumph over those, in which she exerciseth Patience, and Meekness, and Contentation of Mind all the Life long; and, as far as is possible to Humane Nature, becomes near to God; using this present Life as in a Passage, is neither anxious for the acquest of Earthly things, nor doth so much as think of things present, even in urging Necessity; but perpetually prizing a Life frugal, and discharged of temporal Furniture, respects the Felicity which it hath from thence, and is always disposed for a Blessed End: But incessantly breathing out Piety towards God; it abhors the Defilement of filthy Speaking, not so much as enduring in Speech those things which in Fact it hath banished from its Course of Life, and by degrees contracting the Necessities of Nature, and compelling the Body to be content with mean things; it doth with Temperance, overcome Prodigality; Injustice, with Justice; and corrects Lying, with Truth; and in right order keeps

Moderation in all things, and orders its Method of Life in keeping Concord and Communion with Neighbours: It provides for Friends and Strangers, communicates its Good to those who want, confers upon every one what are commodious for them; not being troublesome to those who rejoyce, but administring Comfort to those who are sad: But in all studiously reaching after the *True Good*, discourfing with sound Speeches, and wise Thoughts void of Elegance and Rudeness, as with certain Medicines, doth cure its Auditors with Decency and Respect, without Contention, Scorn, or Anger: For since it is furnished with reason, it refuseth every unreasonable Motion, and compleatly rules the Affections both of the Body, and the Mind.

This most Excellent *Philosophy* was *begun*, as some say, by *Elias* the Prophet, and *John* the Baptist; but *PHILO*, the *Pythagorean*, writes, "That the most Excellent of (his "Nation) the *Hebrews*, being assembled from "all Parts in a certain place at the Lake *Maria*, "did Philosophize in a little Hill thereunto ad"jacent: but describes their *Habitation*, *Living*, "and *Conversation*; such as we also now see a"mongst the Monks now living in *Egypt*. "For he writes, that they who began to Philo"sophize forsook their Estates, and renounced "both Things and Persons belonging to them,

"and

"and lived without the Walls in solitary Fields "and Orchards; then that their Houses were "Sacred, which they called *Monasteries*; that "they did devoutly worship God with Psalms "and Hymns, nor did touch any Food till Sun-"set; that some among them abstained for three "days together or more, and lay certain days "upon the Ground; but Wine, and Things that "have Blood, they never at all used; but their "Meat was Bread, and Salt, and Hyssop, and "their Drink Water: That ancient Women "and Virgins dwelt among them, and for the "Love of *Philosophy*, (or *Wisdom*) of their "own choice abstained from Marriage.

And *Philo* writing to this purpose seems to intend the *Jews*, who, in his time, imbracing *Christianity*, lived a little too much after the *Jewish* Manner, and observed the Rites of their Nation. For among no others is that kind of Life to be found: from whence I conjecture, that this Philosophy hath, from that time, flourished in *Egypt*: But others think that the *Persecutions* of those times gave Occasion to this Religion; For, because those who escaped by Flight lived in Mountains, and Deserts, and Woods, they contracted a Habit of this kind of Living.

This of St. HIEROM *being omitted in its proper place,* (pag. 46.) *it was thought fit to inſert it here.*

MARK, the Diſciple and Interpreter of *Peter*, intreated by the Brethren at *Rome*, wrote a ſhort Goſpel, according to what he had heard *Peter* relate. Which when *Peter* had read, he approved it, and by his Authority gave it to the Church to be read, as writeth *Clemens in ſexto* ὑποτυπώσεων *libro*, and *Papias* Biſhop of *Hierapolis*. Of this *Mark* doth *Peter* alſo make mention, under the Name of *Babylon*, figuratively ſignifying *Rome*: *The Church which is in* Babylon *ſalutes you, and* (ſo doth) *Mark, my Son.* Wherefore, taking the Goſpel, which he had compoſed, he went to *Egypt*, and firſt Preaching *Chriſt* at *Alexandria*, he founded the Church (there) with ſuch Doctrin and Continence of Life, that it enforced all Followers of Chriſt to their Example. At length *Philo*, the moſt Eloquent of the *Jews*, ſeeing that firſt Church at *Alexandria* yet *Judaizing*, wrote a Book concerning their *Manner of Living*, as in Praiſe of his own Nation. And as *Luke* relates, that the Believers at *Hieruſalem* had all things Common, ſo doth alſo he, what he did ſee done at *Alexandria* under *Mark*, commit to Memory. He Died in the Eighth Year of *Nero*, and was Buried at *Alexandria*, *Anianus* ſucceeding him.

Of

Of the Ancient

MONKS of Egypt,

And their Original;

A

Relation of Piammon, *an Ancient* Egyptian *Abbot, and a* Presbyter *or* Prieſt *of great Grace and Virtue, even to the doing of Miracles,* Caſſian. *Coll.* 18. *cap.* 4.

THERE are in *Egypt Three ſorts of Monks*, whereof Two are excellent, but the Third tepid and ſloathful, and by all means to be avoided. The firſt is of the *Cœnobites*, who living together in a Religious Society, are governed by the Judgment (and Order) of One Elder, (or Superior) of which ſort a very great number of *Monks* are reſident throughout

all *Egypt*. The ſecond, is of the *Anchoretes*, (or *Hermites*) who being firſt inſtructed in the Monaſteries, and become already perfect in their Converſation, have choſen the Secrets of the Deſart: of whoſe Perfection we alſo wiſh to be Partakers. The third, the reprehenſible one of the *Sarabaits*. Of all which we ſhall diſcourſe ſeverally more fully in order.

The Diſcipline of the *Cœnobites* took its beginning from the time of the Preaching of the Apoſtles. For ſuch was that whole Multitude of Believers at *Jeruſalem*, which, in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, is thus deſcrib'd:

The Multitude of them, who believed, were of one Heart, and of one Soul; neither ſaid any of them that ought of the things, which he poſſeſſed, were his own; but they had all things Common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were Poſſeſſors of Land or Houſes, ſold them, and brought the Prices of the things which were ſold, and laid them down at the Feet of the Apoſtles; and Diſtribution was made unto every Man according as he had need.

Such, I ſay, was then the whole Church, as it is now difficult to find a very few in the Monaſteries. But when, after the Apoſtles deceaſe, the Multitude of the Believers began to grow Tepid, and that moſt of all, which came into the Faith of Chriſt of Foreigners and divers Nations, of whom the Apoſtles, according to their Rudiments

ments of Faith, and inveterate Custom of *Gentilism*, did require no more, but that they should abstain from Fornication, and from things strangled, and from Blood; and that Liberty which was indulged to the *Gentiles*, by reason of the Infirmity of their first Belief, began by degrees to contaminate the Perfection even of that Church, which was settled at *Jerusalem*; and the Number daily increasing, either of Natives, or of Foreigners, the Fervour of that first Faith began to cool; not only those who came flowing in to the Faith of Christ, but even they who were the Principal of the Church were relaxed from that Strictness. For some thinking that, which they saw conceded to the *Gentiles*, by reason of their Infirmity, to be lawful also for themselves, believed they should suffer no Detriment, if they did, with their Goods and Estates, (retaining them in Propriety to themselves) follow the Faith and Confession of Christ. But others, in whom the Apostolick Fervour did still abide, mindful of that ancient Perfection, departing from their Cities, and from the Company of those who believed the Negligence of a more remiss Life to be Lawful for themselves, or for the Church of God, began to reside in places without the Cities, and more secret, (or retir'd) and to exercise privately and apart the things which they remembred to be instituted by the Apostles generally throughout the whole Body

of

of the Church: And ſo did that Diſcipline, which we have mentioned, of the Diſciples, who ſequeſtred themſelves from the Contagion of the reſt, come to a Settlement. Who, in proceſs of time, by degrees, being ſeparate from the Crowds of Believers, becauſe they did abſtain from Marriage, and withdrew themſelves from the Company of their Parents, and the Converſation of the World, were called *Monachi*, or *Monazontes*, for the Strictneſs of their ſingle and ſolitary Life. Whence it follow'd, that, from the Communion of their Company, they were called *Cœnobitæ*, and their Cells and Habitations *Cœnobia*. This therefore alone was the moſt Ancient kind of *Monks*, which was the prime, not only in Time, but alſo in Grace (and Vertue,) and which continued inviolable for very many Years, even to the Age of Father *Paul*, or *Antony*; the Footſteps whereof we even now ſee remaining in the ſtrict *Cœnobia*, (or Monaſteries, as now called.)

Of this number of Perfect ones, and, as I may ſay, fertile Root, were produced after theſe alſo the Flowers and Fruits of the *Holy Anchoretes*, (or *Hermites*;) of which Profeſſion, we know, thoſe, whom we a little before remembred, *viz.* Holy *Paul* and *Antony*, to have been the Principal, or firſt Beginners. Who betook themſelves to the Secrets or Retirements of Solitude, not as ſome, through Puſillanimity, or the Diſeaſe of Impatience,

Impatience, but out of Deſign of more ſublime Advancement, and Divine Contemplation, although the former of them is ſaid to have gone into the Wilderneſs under pretence of Neceſſity, while, in the time of Perſecution, he avoids the Snares of his Relations. Thus from that Diſcipline, which we have mentioned, proceeded another kind of Perfection, the Followers of which are deſervedly named *Anachoretæ*, that is, Retir'd, becauſe not content with this Victory, whereby they have avoided the ſecret Snares of the Devil among Men, deſigning to encounter the Devils in an open Combat and manifeſt Conflict, they fear not to enter into the vaſt Receſſes of the Wilderneſs, in imitation of *John* the Baptiſt, who remained in the Wilderneſs his whole Life; and of *Elias* and *Eliſha*, and of thoſe whom the Apoſtle makes mention of thus: *They wandred about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: Of whom the World was not worthy, wandering in Deſarts, and in Mountains, and in Dens, and in Caves of the Earth*, Heb. 11. 37, 38.

And when the Chriſtian Religion did flouriſh in theſe two Profeſſions of Monks, but this Order alſo began to decline, there aroſe up after thoſe, that worſt and unfaithful kind of Monks, or rather, that Evil Plantation reviving grew up, which, by *Ananias* and *Sapphira* ſprouting out in the beginning of the Church, was cut down by the

the Apostle *Peter*; which, among the Monks, was judged detestable and execrable, nor by any other more used, so long as the Fear of that strict Sentence remained with them fixed in the Memory of the Faithful, with which the Blessed Apostle, not suffering the afore-said Leaders of that New Crime to be cured with any Penitence, or any Satisfaction, did cut off the pernicious Sprout with sudden Death. But that Example, whereby with Apostolical Severity it was punished in *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, being, through long Inconsiderateness, and the obliterating nature of Time, by degrees, substracted from the Contemplation of some, there arose that sort of the *Sarabites*; who from thence that they did sequester themselves from the Congregation of the *Cœnobites*, and did separately provide for their own Occasions, in the propriety of the *Egyptian* Language were named *Sarabites*, proceeding out of the Number of those, whom we mentioned before, who choose rather to simulate the Evangelical Perfection, than to embrace it in Truth and Reality; being provok'd with an Emulation, or by the Commendation of those, who preferred the compleat Nudity of Christ before all the Riches of the World. For these, while either with a weak Mind they affect a Matter of the highest Virtue, or are by Necessity compelled to come to this Profession, while they are eager only to be reckoned under the

the Name of *Monks*, without any Emulation of their Studies or Endeavours, they do not at all ſeek after the Diſcipline of the *Cœnobites*, nor are they ſubject to the Will and Ordering of the Seniors or Superiors, nor being inſtructed by their Traditions, do they learn to overcome their own Wills, or receive any Rule of Diſcretion by a regular Erudition, but renouncing (the World) in outward Appearance, *that is*, to the ſight of Men, they either continue in their Houſes under the Priviledge of this Name, obliged to the ſame Occupations; or building Cells for themſelves, and calling them *Monaſteries*, they abide there in their own Power and Liberty, not at all ſubmitting to the Evangelical Precepts, *viz.* that they be imployed in no Solicitude for daily Food, in no Diſtractions of Family Concerns; which they only uſe without Infidel doubting, who being ſet free from all the Goods of this World, do ſo ſubject themſelves to the Preſidents of the Monaſteries, that they do not ſo much as own themſelves to be Lords of themſelves. But they, who declining, as we ſaid, the Strictneſs of the Monaſtery, reſide two or three together in Cells, not content to be govern'd by the Care and Government of the Abbot, but principally procuring this for themſelves, that being ſet free from the Yoke of the Superiors, they may have the Liberty of exerciſing their own Wills, and of going out, and

gading

gading where, or doing what they please, even more in their daily Works than those, who live in the Monasteries, are (indeed) consumed (and wasted) Day and Night, but not with the same Faith, and the same Purpose (of Mind.) For this they do, not that they may subject (or commit) the Fruit or Product of their Labour to the Judgment of the Steward; but that they may acquire Money, which they may lay up. Between which, what *Difference* there is, I pray you observe.

Those not thinking any thing of the Morrow, do offer to God the most grateful Fruits of their Labour. But these extending their Infidel Solicitude not only to the Morrow, but even to the Terms of many Years, believe God either a Lyar, or a Beggar; who either cannot, or will not, afford them his promised Sufficiency of daily Food and Rayment. Those, with all earnestness, desire that they may attain Nudity of all things, and Poverty: These, that they may obtain an Affluence of all Goods: They striving with one another, labour to exceed in their daily Works the stated Rule, for this purpose, that what is redundant above the Holy Uses of the Monastery, may be given to the Prisons, or to the Hospitals, or to the Poor, at the Pleasure of the Abbot: These, that what remains of their daily Gluttony, may serve either for a more profuse Gratification, or be hoarded up through the

Sin

Sin of Covetouſneſs. *Laſtly*, To grant that theſe things, which are with none of the beſt Purpoſes hoarded up, may alſo, by them, be better diſpoſed of than we have ſaid; yet even ſo do they not aſpire to the Worth of the Virtue and Perfection of the others. For they bringing ſo great Revenues to the Monaſtery, and daily renouncing them themſelves, do perſevere in ſo great Humility of Subjection, that they are deprived of the Power, as of themſelves, ſo alſo of thoſe things which, with their Sweat, they have acquired, continually renewing the Fervor of their firſt Ab-renunciation, while they do daily ſtrip themſelves of the Fruits of their own Labour. But theſe, even in that which they give to the Poor, being puff'd up, do daily fall headlong. Thoſe, the Patience and Strictneſs, with which they ſo devoutly hold out in this Profeſſion, which they had once imbraced, that they never fulfill their own Wills, makes them daily crucified to the World, and living Martyrs: but theſe, the Tepidity and Lukewarmneſs of their own Wills ſinks down alive into Hell.

There is alſo another, *a fourth ſort*, which we ſee lately to have riſen in theſe, who flatter themſelves with the Shew and Image of *Anchoretes*, and who, in their Beginnings, did ſeem with a kind of ſhort Fervour to deſire the Perfection of the *Cœnobites*, but preſently being cool'd,

cool'd, while they refuſe to cut off their former Manners and Vices, nor are content long to bear the Yoak of Humility and Patience, and diſdain to be ſubject to the Government of the Seniors, or Superiors, they require ſeparate Cells, and deſire to ſit Solitaries, *viz.* that ſo, they being provoked by none, they may be thought Patient, Meek, and Humble, by Men. Which Inſtitution, yea, Lukewarmneſs, whom it once infects, it never permits to arrive at Perfection. For, by this means, their Corruptions are not only not cured, but ſtrengthened for the worſe, while they are provok'd by none; as a certain deadly inteſtine Poyſon, by how much the more it is conceiled, ſpreading ſo much the deeper, makes the Diſeaſe incurable to the Party.

St. Hierom *concerning the ſame, Epiſt.* 22. ad Euſtoch. *c.* 15.

THERE are in *Egypt Three ſorts of Monks*: the firſt, *Cœnobites*, which they, in the Language of their Countrey, call *Sauces*, we may ſay living in Common: The ſecond, *Anchoretes*, who live alone ſeparately throughout the Deſarts,

Deſarts, and from thence that they have retired far from Men, are ſo called. The third, that which they call *Remoboth*, a very bad and diſeſteemed kind, and that which, in our Province, is either ſole, or the firſt. Theſe inhabit two or three, and not many more, together, living at their own Pleaſure and Command, and of what they have wrought, bring all together for common Maintenance. They dwell, for the moſt part, in Cities and Towns, and, as if their Art, not their Lives, were Holy, what-ever they ſell is at a greater Price (than ordinary.) There are often Squabbles among them, becauſe living of their own Proviſions they do not ſuffer themſelves to be ſubject to any one. They are wont, in truth, to contend about Faſtings; and what is matter of Secreſie, they make it matter of Victory (or Triumph.) Among them all things are affected, their Sleeves large, their Sandals flopping, their Garment thicker, and frequent are their Sighs, viſits of Virgins, and detraction of the Clergy; and if a Feaſt-Day come, they fill themſelves till they vomit. Theſe therefore being caſhiered, as very Peſts, let us come to thoſe who are more in number, and live in Common, *that is*, thoſe whom we have ſaid are called *Cœnobites*.

The firſt Confederation, or mutual Agreement amongſt them, is, to obey their Superiors, and to do what-ever they command. They

are divided into Decennaries, (or Tithings) (as our Anceſtors call'd them) and Centenaries; ſo that One of Ten doth preſide over the other Nine, and over thoſe Ten Preſidents the Centenarie, or Hundreder. They abide ſeparate, but in Cells joyned together, until the ninth hour; according to their Inſtitute, none goes to another, except theſe Decanes or Deans, whom we mentioned, that if, perhaps, any of them hath any doubtful Thoughts, he may be comforted by his Diſcourſes. After the ninth hour they come together in common, where Pſalms are ſung or chanted, the Scriptures read, as accuſtomed, and the Prayers being done, and all ſitting down, he in the middle, whom they call the Father, begins to diſcourſe; while he is ſpeaking, there is great Silence, (and Compoſedneſs) that no one dares to look aſide, or to hawk and ſpit. The Excellence of the Speaker appears in the Weeping of the Auditors: ſilent Tears trickle down their Faces, but their Compunction doth not ſo much as break out into Sighs. But when he comes to ſpeak concerning *the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of the future Beatitude and Glory to come*, you may ſee all, with a moderate Sigh, and Eyes lift up to Heaven, ſay, *Who will give me the Wings of a Dove, and I will fly away, and be at reſt?* After this the Aſſembly is diſmiſſed, and each Tithing or Decennary, with their Father, go to their Table, where they

ſerve every Week by turn. There is no Noiſe at their Meal, none, while eating, ſpeaks: They live upon Bread, Pulſe, and Herbs, which are ſeaſoned only with Salt. Wine only Old Men take, who with Children have their Meal together, that the ſpent Age of ſome may be ſuſteined, and the tender Age of others not deſtroyed. Then they riſe together, and having ſung an Hymn, retire to their Stalls. There, until Evening, each with his Companions diſcourſed to this purpoſe: Did you ſee ſuch an one, and ſuch an one? What Grace in him? What Silence? What decent Comportment? If they ſee one weak, they comfort him; if fervent in the Love of God, they incourage him to Induſtry. And becauſe in the Night, out of the time of publick Prayers, each doth watch in his own Couch, they go about to every one of their Cells, and laying their Ear to them, diligently liſten what they do. Whom they apprehend more remiſs, they do not preſently reprove; but, diſſemble what they hear, viſit him more often; and Beginners they rather provoke at firſt, than compel to Prayer. The Work of the Day is ſettled, and being delivered to the Decane or Tithing-Man, is after carried to the Steward, who himſelf alſo doth every Month, with great Reverence, give account to the (General) Father of all. By whom alſo the Proviſions, when made ready, are taſted;

and becauſe none may ſay I want a Coat, or a Caſſock, or a Mat, he ſo orders all things, that none ſhould ask, none ſhould want. But if any begin to be Sick, he is carried to a larger Room, and is ſo taken Care of by the Miniſtery of the Old Men, that he deſireth not the Delicacies of Cities, or the Affection of his Mother. Upon the *Lord's-Day* they apply themſelves only to Prayer and Reading; which indeed they do at all times when their Work is done: They do every Day learn ſomething out of the Scriptures. Their *Faſt* is alike all the Year, except *Lent*, in which only it is permitted them to live more ſtrictly. From *Eaſter* to *Whitſontide* their Suppers are changed into Dinners, whereby both the Eccleſiaſtical Tradition is obſerved, and they do not charge their Stomach with a doubled Portion of Food. Such doth *Philo*, an Imitator of the *Platonick* Stile; ſuch *Joſephus*, the *Greek Livie*, in the ſecond Hiſtory of the *Captivity of the Jews*, relate the ESSEANS to be.

St. Auſtin *concerning the ſame.*

UPON *John* 10. 11. *I am the Good Shepherd.* But there in *Egypt*, how he is the Good Shepherd, thoſe who know, do confeſs; thoſe who know not, let them inquire how

Great

Great a Flock he hath there together, how Great a Number of Holy Men and Women, wholly contemning the World, he there hath. That Flock hath ſo increaſed, that it hath expell'd *Superſtition* even from thence; all the Superſtitions of Idols, which were ſo powerful there, hath it expell'd. *Serm.* 50. *de Verb. Dom. c.* 10.

St. Auſtin *concerning the* Anchorets, *and* Cœnobites, *and* Holy Nuns *of his time.*

DEſervedly haſt thou (O Catholick Church, the moſt True Mother of Chriſtians) ſo many Hoſpitable People, ſo many Officious, ſo many Merciful, ſo many Learned, ſo many Chaſt, ſo many Holy, ſo many ſo Inflamed with the *Love of God*, that in the greateſt Continence and incredible Contempt of this World they are delighted with the Deſart. What, I pray you, is it that they ſee, who cannot not love Man, and yet can (live and) not ſee Man? Truly that, what-ever it is, is more excellent than Humane things, (or any thing of Man) in the Contemplation of which, a Man can live without (the Sight of) Man. (*This of* Anchorets, *and then, a little after, of the* Cœnobites.

Who knows not that a Multitude of Chriſtians, of moſt exquiſite Continence, are daily more and more diffuſed throughout the whole World, and eſpecially in the *Eaſt*, and in *Egypt*, which you can by no means be ignorant of. I'll ſay nothing of thoſe, whom I mentioned a little before, who being moſt retired wholly from all ſight of Men, are content with Bread alone, which at certain times is brought to them, and Water, inhabit the moſt barren Deſarts, enjoying Communication with God, to whom they adhere with pure Minds, and are bleſſed with the Contemplation of his Beauty, which cannot be perceived but by the Intellects of Saints. I ſay I will ſay nothing of theſe: for they ſeem to ſome to have forſaken Humane Affairs more than they ought, who underſtand not how much their Minds do profit in Prayer, and their Lives for Examples to others, whoſe Bodies we are not permitted to ſee. But I think it long and ſuperfluous to diſcourſe of this: For this ſo great a height of Sanctity, who doth not of his own accord think it to be admir'd and honoured, who by our Speech can think ſo? Only they are to be admoniſhed, who vainly boaſt themſelves, that the Temperance and Continence of the moſt Holy Chriſtians of the Catholick Faith hath proceeded ſo far, that it may ſeem to ſome that it ſhould be reſtrained and recalled within Humane Bounds: So far above

Men

Men are their Minds thought to have aſcended by thoſe who are diſpleaſed at it.

But if this exceeds our Ability to bear, who will not admire and applaud thoſe, who, having contemned and forſaken the Allurements of this World, are congregated into a common, moſt chaſt and moſt holy Life, ſpend their Days together, living in Prayers, Leſſons, Conferences, not puffed up with any Pride, nor troubleſome with any Obſtinacy, nor pining with any Envy; but modeſt, baſhful, quiet, do offer up to God their Lives moſt agreeable among themſelves, and moſt firmly adhering to Him, from whom they received this Power, a moſt grateful Preſent. None poſſeſſes any thing of his own; None is burthenſome to any one. They work thoſe things with their Hands, with which their Body may be ſupplied, and they not be hindered from God. But the Work it ſelf they deliver to thoſe whom they call *Deans*, becauſe they have the Over-ſight of Tens, that none of them may be touch'd with any Care of their Body, neither in Food or Rayment, nor any thing elſe needful for daily Occaſions, or for any change of Health, if it happen, as is common. But thoſe Deans diſpenſing all things with great Care, and making ready what-ever that Life doth, by reaſon of the Imbecility of the Body, require, do yet deliver all over to one, whom they call *the Father*. But theſe Fathers are not only moſt

holy in their Manners, but moſt excellent in Divine Doctrin, eminent in all things: They direct without any Pride thoſe, whom they call Sons, with great Authority of Command, and with great Readineſs of Obedience in them. They meet all at the end of the Day every one out of their Cells, while yet Faſting, to hear that Father. And they meet before each of the Fathers, at leaſt *Three Thouſand Men:* for many more live under one. They *hear* with incredible Attention, and deepeſt Silence, ſignifying the Affections of their Mind, as the Speech of him who ſpeaks moveth them, either with Sighing, or with Weeping; but Modeſt, and without Noiſe. Then they refreſh their Bodies ſo much as is ſufficient for Health and Salubrity, each reſtraining his Appetite, leſt it be greedy even of thoſe few and mean things which are provided. In like manner they abſtain, not only from Fleſh and Wine, for ſufficient allay of Luſts, but alſo from thoſe things which do ſo much the more excite and provoke the Appetite of the Stomach and of the Palate, by how much they may ſeem to ſome more clean: Under which pretence, a filthy Deſire of exquiſite Diſhes, without Fleſh, is wont to be ridiculouſly and filthily defended. Truly, what-ever is redundant above neceſſary Proviſion; for there is much redundant by the Work of their Hands, and the Strictneſs of their Meals; it is with no

leſs

leſs Care diſtributed to the Poor, than with what it was earned by them who diſtribute it. For they do by no means endeavour that theſe things ſhould abound with them, but by all means are diligent, that what doth abound may not remain with them; inſomuch, that they ſend even Ships laden to thoſe places where indigent People dwell. There's no need to ſay more of a thing ſo well known.

This is alſo *the Life of the* WOMEN, who ſerve God with Carefulneſs and Chaſtity, who are ſeparated and removed from Men as far as is decent, joyned to them only in pious Charity, and Imitation of Virtue; to whom Young Men have no acceſs at all, nor the Ancient neither, although moſt Grave and Approved, further than to the threſhold, for the ſupplying them with the Neceſſaries which they need. They do both exerciſe and ſuſtain the Body, by making Cloth, and deliver the Garments themſelves to the Brethren, receiving of them again what is neceſſary for their Maintenance.

Theſe *Manners*, this *Life*, this *Order*, this *Inſtitution*, if I would praiſe it, I am not able to do it as it deſerves. And I fear leſt I ſhould ſeem to think that of it ſelf barely related it would not pleaſe, if I ſhould think fit to add to the Simplicity of a *Reporter* the Flouriſhes of an *Orator*. *lib.* 1. de Moribus Eccleſiæ Catholicæ. *cap.* 30, 31.

The

The Direction *of* Piammon, *to ſome Foreiners, who came to his Monaſtery.*

WHo-ever deſires to obtain the Skill of any Art, unleſs with all Care and Vigilance he oblige himſelf to the Studies and Labors of that Diſcipline, which he deſires to learn, and obſerves the Precepts and Inſtitutions of the moſt compleat Maſters of that Art or Science, he doth in vain, with vain Deſires, wiſh to be like them, whoſe Care and Induſtry he refuſeth to emulate.....

Wherefore, if the Cauſe of God, as we believe, drew you to an Emulation of our Knowledge, you muſt, abdicating the Prejudices of your Education, with all Humility, obſerve what-ever ye ſhall ſee your Seniors (or Superiors) do or preſcribe. Nor let it move you, or withdraw and divert you from that Imitation, although, at preſent, the Reaſon or Cauſe of any Thing or Fact (which you ſee) be not manifeſt to you. For to thoſe who think well and ſimply of all things, and do more ſtudy to imitate than examin

amin what they ſee preſcribed or done by the Ancients, by their own Experience doth the Knowledge of all things come to them. But he will never enter into the *Reaſon* of the *Truth*, who begins to learn with queſtioning things: For the Enemy ſeeing him rather confiding in his own, than in the Judgment of the Fathers, doth eaſily drive him to that, that even thoſe things which are moſt profitable and wholſome for him, ſhall ſeem to him ſuperfluous and hurtful: And ſo doth the crafty Enemy impoſe upon his Preſumption, that he perſwades him, pertinaciouſly adhering to his unreaſonable Determinations, that that only is Holy which he, in the Error of his Obſtinacy, thinks Right and Juſt. *Caſſian. Coll.* 18. *cap.* 2, 3.

An Excellent Exhortation of Pinuphius *to a Novice, upon his Admittance into his Monaſtery.*

lib. 4. de Vit. Pat. *cap.* 31. ex Caſſian.

SON, thou knoweſt after how many Days waiting before the Doors, thou art this Day received. Of which difficulty (of thy Reception) thou oughteſt, in the firſt place, to underſtand the Cauſe: for it may advantage thee much in this Life, which thou deſireſt to enter

enter into, if, underſtanding the Reaſon of it, thou doſt accordingly come to the Service of Chriſt, and as thou oughteſt to do. For as infinite Glory is promiſed hereafter to thoſe, who faithfully ſerve God, and do adhere to Him according to the Inſtitution of this Rule: ſo moſt grievous Pains are prepared for them, who ſhall perform the ſame coldly and negligently; and ſhall neglect to produce congruous Fruits of Sanctity, according to what they do profeſs, or by Men are believed to be. For it is better not to Vow, than to vow, and not perform: and *Curſed is he who doth the Work of the Lord negligently.* Therefore, for this cauſe, waſt thou long refuſed by us, not that we do not deſire, with all our Hearts, to promote the Salvation of thee, or of all, [or do not wiſh, even afar off, to meet thoſe who deſire to come to Chriſt] but leſt, being too haſtily received, we ſhould make both our ſelves guilty before God of Levity, and thee of the greater Puniſhment, if, at preſent, eaſily received, and, not underſtanding the weight of this Profeſſion, thou ſhouldeſt afterward prove either a (total) Deſerter, or a tepid (Profeſſor.)— Know therefore that this Day thou art dead to this World, and that, according to the Apoſtle, *thou art crucified to the World, and the World to thee.*— But perhaps thou wilt ſay, How can one that is Living be Crucified? Hear briefly the Reaſon.

Our

Our *Croſs*, is *the Fear of the Lord:* for as one Crucified, hath not the power thereafter to move or turn his Members any way at the pleaſure of his own Mind; ſo we alſo ought to apply our Wills and Deſires, not to that which pleaſeth us at preſent, but according to the Precept of the Lord, as it obligeth us. And as he who is fixed to the Tree of the Croſs, doth not then regard the things of this World, nor think of his Affections, is then moved with no deſire of Poſſeſſions, and while he is yet living in the Body, reckons himſelf dead to all Earthly things; ſo we alſo, by the Fear of God, ought to be crucified to all carnal Vices, and there always to have the Eyes of our Minds fixed, whether we ought every moment to hope to arrive. We muſt therefore beware that we do not at any time reſume any of thoſe things, which, at our Renouncing (the World) we have forſaken. For the crafty Serpent doth always watch our Steps, *that is*, he lays Snares for our going out, and even to the end of our Life doth always endeavour to ſupplant us: and therefore to have begun well profits nothing, if it be not well finiſhed. Wherefore, according to the Determination of the Scripture, being entred into the Service of the Lord, ſtand in the Fear of the Lord, and prepare thy Soul, not for Eaſe, not for Delights, but for Temptations and Streights: for we muſt through many Tribulations enter into the

the Kingdom of God; *For narrow is the Gate, and ſtraight is the Way, which leads to Life, and few there are who find it.*

The Beginning therefore of our *Salvation*, is *the Fear of the Lord:* For by this, is both the beginning of our Converſion, and the Preſervation of our Virtue obtained; which, when it has once pierced into the Mind of Man, it produceth a Contempt of all (theſe) things, and begets an abhorrence of the World; and by Contempt, and forſaking of our Riches, is *true Humility* obtained. And Humility is proved by theſe Tokens: 1. If the Religious perſon have in him all his Wills mortified. 2. If he conceil not his Acts nor his Thoughts from his Superior. 3. If he commit all to his Judgment, (and reſerve) nothing to his own Diſcretion. 4. If in all things commanded he keep the Meekneſs of Obedience, and Conſtancy of Patience. 5. If he do Injury to none, and alſo bear patiently thoſe done to him. 6. If he do nothing beſides the Exemplar of his Rule. 7. If to all things commanded him, he judgeth himſelf as an ill and unworthy Workman. 8. If he declare himſelf inferior to all. 9. If he hold his Tongue, and be not forward to ſpeak. 10. If he be not apt to Laughter. By ſuch Tokens is true Humility diſcerned.

And theſe things alſo be neceſſary for thee to be obſerved in the Congregation, *viz.* That, according

according to the Declaration of the *Pſalmiſt*, thou beeſt as one Deaf, not Hearing; and one Dumb, not opening his Mouth: queſtioning nothing, judging nothing of theſe things, which ſhall be commanded thee. Wherefore thou oughteſt not to hope to obtain thy Patience from the Virtue of others, *that is*, that thou then only poſſeſs it, when thou art provoked by no Body.

The beginning of our Salvation, (as hath been ſaid) is, *the Fear of our Lord*. Of the Fear of our Lord, is found Compunction begotten; From Compunction of the Heart, proceed Contempt and Nakedneſs of all Riches; From that Nakedneſs, Humility proceed; Of Humility, is begotten Mortification of our Wills; And by Mortification of our Wills, are all Vices extirpated; By the expulſion of Vices, do Virtues fructifie and grow up; And by the growth of Virtues, is Purity of Heart acquired; And by Purity of Heart, is the Perfection of Apoſtolical Charity poſſeſſed. *Caſſian. 4. Inſtit. cap. 32.*

The Advice of Moſes, *an Ancient* Egyptian Abbot, *for the obtaining true* Diſcretion.

TRUE *Diſcretion* is not acquired but by true *Humility*. Of which Humility, this is

is the first Proof, if all things, not only which are acted, but even which are thought, be referred to the Examination of the Elders, so that the Person, not trusting to his own Judgment, do, in all things, acquiesce in their Determinations, and learn what he ought to judge Good or Evil by their Teaching. Which Instruction will not only teach a Young Person to walk in the right path by the true Way of Discretion, but will also preserve him unhurt from all the Frauds and Snares of the Enemy. For he can by no means be deceived, who ever lives not after his own Judgment, but after the Manner of the Ancients: Nor will the Crafty Enemy be able to impose upon his Ignorance, who doth not cover any of the Thoughts arising in his Heart with a pernicious Bashfulness, but doth either reject or admit them upon mature examination of the Elders. For immediately after a malignant Thought is discovered, it withers; and before the Judgment of Discretion be pronounced, the filthy Serpent, being, as it were, by the virtue of Confession drawn out of his dark subterraneous Den into the Light, and in a manner exposed and detected, withdraws himself. For so long do his noxious Suggestions prevail in us as they are conceiled in the Heart, and no longer. *Cassian. Coll.* 2. *ca.* 10. *v.* 4. *Instit. cap.* 9, 39. *Basil. Ascet. Qu.* 26. *Const. cap.* 19.

The

The Inſtruction *of the Ancient* Egyptian Abbot, Neſtero, *concerning* Spiritual Knowledge, *Caſſ. Coll.* 14.

THERE are many kinds of Sciences in this World: For as great Variety there is of them, as (there is) of Arts and Diſciplines: But though all of them are either altogether unprofitable, or ſerviceable only for the Commodities of this Life; yet is there none of them, which hath not a proper Order and Method of its Teaching, by which it may be attained by thoſe who deſire it. If therefore thoſe Arts are directed to be attained by certain and proper Methods, how much rather doth the Diſcipline and Profeſſion of our Religion, which tends to the contemplating of the Secrets of Inviſible Myſteries, and ſeeks not the Retribution of a temporal Gain, but of Eternal Reward, conſiſt in a certain Order and Method: Of which, the Science is two-fold: the firſt, *Practical*; that is, Actual, which is performed in the Amendment of Manners, and the Purgation of Vices: the other, is *Theoretical*; that is, which conſiſts in the Contemplation of Di-

vine things, and the Knowledge of moſt Sacred Senſes. (*cap.* 1.)

Who-ever therefore would attain to the *Theoretick*, (or Contemplative) it is neceſſary that with all Study and Induſtry he acquire firſt the *Actual Science*. For this Practical may be poſſeſſed without the Theoretick; but the Theoretick without the Practick cannot be throughly apprehended: For there are certain Steps ſo ordered and diſtinguiſhed, that the mean Eſtate of Man may aſcend to the top: If they ſucceed one another in the Order which we have ſaid, one may by them come to the top; to which, if the firſt be taken away he cannot fly up. He doth therefore in vain endeavour to ſee God, who doth not avoid the Infection of Vices: *For the Spirit of God flies that which is feigned, nor will it dwell in a Body ſubject to Sins.* (*cap.* 2.)

But this Actual Accompliſhment conſiſts of two Branches; The firſt, the Knowledge of the Nature, and of the Cure of Vices: The ſecond, the Knowledge of the Order of Virtues; and the Accompliſhment of the Mind with them; ſo that it may not ſerve them by the Compulſion of a forcible Regiment, but be as it were fed and delighted (with them) as with a Good natural to it, and aſcend that hard and narrow Way with Delight. (*cap.* 3.)

If your Concern be to attain to the Light of *Spiritual Knowledge*, not out of vain Oſtentation, but

but from the Grace of Reformation, you muſt firſt be affected with a Deſire of that Beatitude, of which it is ſaid, *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*: that ye may alſo arrive to that, concerning which the Angel ſaid to *Daniel*: *But they, who are inſtructed, ſhall ſhine as the Splendor of the Firmament; and they, who inſtruct many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.*——

Wherefore, continuing that Diligence of Reading, which I perceive you have, make haſt with all Induſtry, as ſoon as may be, to learn compleatly the Actual, that is, *the Moral Diſcipline*; for without this cannot be underſtood that Contemplative Purity, which I mentioned, which they alone obtain, as a Reward after the Expence of many Labours and Pains, who become perfect, not by the Words of other Teachers, but by the Virtue of their own Actions.—— If ye will prepare a Sacred Tabernacle in your Heart for Spiritual Knowledge; purge your ſelves from the Contagion of all Vices, and deveſt your ſelves of the Cares of this Life: For it is impoſſible for a Soul which is buſied but a little in Worldly Affairs, to obtain the Gift of Knowledge, or to be fruitful in Spiritual Senſes, or retentive of Sacred Leſſons. Obſerve therefore in the firſt place, leſt your Study in Reading, and Labour of your Deſire, be fruſtrated by vain Elation, that you impoſe

Silence on your Tongue: For this is the firſt Entrance of Actual Diſcipline; — and that you receive the Inſtitutions and Sentences of all the Seniors with Attention and Silence; and laying them up in your Heart, make haſt more to practice them your ſelves, than to teach them to others: For from this, will grow a pernicious Preſumption of Vain-Glory; but from that, the Fruit of Spiritual Underſtanding. Do not dare therefore to utter any thing in a Conference of the Seniors, but what either an hurtful Ignorance, or the Cauſe of neceſſary Knowledge doth compel, as ſome, who, fill'd with the Affection of Vain-Glory, pretend to enquire what they know very well: For it is impoſſible that he, who, out of deſign to gain the Applauſe of Men applies himſelf to the Study of Reading, ſhould obtain the Gift of *true Science*. For, of neceſſity, he who is fettered with this Paſſion, muſt be bound alſo with other Vices, and eſpecially of *Pride*; and ſo failing in the Actual and Moral Undertaking, he cannot at all attain to *Spiritual Knowledge*, which ſprings from it. Neither preſume to teach to any in Words, what you have not firſt practiſed in Deeds: For this Order hath our Lord, by his Example, taught us to obſerve, of whom it is ſaid, —*Which Jeſus began to do, and to teach.* Beware therefore, leſt leaping out to Teach, before Practice, you be reputed in the Number of them, of whom, in the Goſpel,

Goſpel, our Lord ſays to his Diſciples: *What they ſay to you, obſerve and do; but according to their Works, do not: for they ſay, and do not*, &c. *c.* 9.

If therefore you would attain to the true Knowledge of the Scriptures, you muſt make haſt firſt to obtain a ſettled *Humility* in your Heart; which will lead you, not to that which puffs up, but to that which gives Light of Underſtanding, or illuſtrates Knowledge by the Perfection of Charity. For it is impoſſible that an uncleanſed Mind ſhould obtain the Gift of Spiritual Knowledge, &c. (*cap.* 10.)

Moreover, this is by all means to be endeavoured, that having expell'd all Earthly Solicitude and Thought, you give your ſelf continually to Sacred Leſſons, until continual Meditation tincture your Mind, and form it to the Likeneſs of it ſelf, &c. (*cap.* 10.)

But it is impoſſible, as I ſaid before, that any one unexperienced ſhould either underſtand or teach theſe things: For he who is not capable ſo much as to conceive them, How ſhould he be fit to teach 'em? Of which, if notwithſtanding he ſhould preſume to teach any thing, his Speech, without doubt, would be ineffectual and unprofitable, reach only to the Ears of the Auditors, but not pierce the Heart. (*cap.* 14.)

Abbot Moſes, *concerning the* End *and* Scope *of a* Monaſtick Life, *Caſſian. Coll.* 1.

THE *End* of our Undertaking, according to the Apoſtle, is *Life Eternal*: ſo he ſaith *Rom.* 6. 22. *Having your Fruit unto Holineſs, and the End Everlaſting Life*: But the *Scope* Purity of Heart, which he deſervedly calls *Holineſs* or *Sanctification*; without which the afore-ſaid End cannot be attained.— Which *Scope* he elſewhere expreſsly mentions: *Forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the* (Scope or) *Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3.— Whatever therefore guides us to this Mark, *that is*, Purity of Heart, it is to be followed with all our Might: but what-ever doth withdraw us from it, is to be eſchewed as pernicious and noxious. For, for *this* do we undergo and act all things: For *this* are *Parents, Country, Dignities, Riches, Delights of this World*, and all *Pleaſure*, contemned, *to wit*, that perpetual Purity of Heart may be retained. This Deſign therefore being reſolved upon, our Acts and Thoughts ſhall always be rightly directed

rected to the obtaining of it. Which if it be not continually ſet before our Eyes, it will not only make all our Labors vain and inſtable without Profit, but alſo all our Thoughts varying and contrary to themſelves. For, of neceſſity, the Soul, which hath not whether to have recourſe, and where principally to reſt, muſt every moment be changed, according to the variety of its Occurrences; and by thoſe things which happen without, be continually transformed into that State which next preſents its ſelf. (*cap* 5.)

For this Cauſe therefore are all things to be done and ſought after by us: for *this*, is the *Deſert* to be choſen; for *this*, *Faſtings*, *Watchings*, *Labors*, *Nakedneſs*, *Readings*, and other Exerciſes of *Virtue*, we know, are by us to be undertaken; *to wit*, that by them we may prepare and keep our Heart unhurt from all noxious Paſſions; and by treading thoſe ſteps aſcend to the Perfection of Charity. — They are not Perfection, but the Inſtruments of Perfection: for in them doth not conſiſt the End of this Diſcipline; but by them is the End arrived to. — What-ever therefore may diſturb that Purity and Tranquility of our Mind, although it may ſeem Profitable and Neceſſary, is to be avoided as noxious. (*cap.* 7.)

This ought therefore to be our principal endeavour, *this* the unmoveable Deſign of our Heart continually to be deſired, that our Mind

may continually adhere to God and Divine things. What-ever differs from that, how-ever great, is to be judged of an inferior Nature, or of the meaneſt, or certainly noxious. The Figure of this Mind or Action is very finely repreſented in the Goſpel in the Perſons of *Martha* and *Mary*. ——— In which you ſee that our Lord placed the principal Good in the Theory, *that is*, in Divine Contemplation. Whence the other Virtues, though we declare them neceſſary, yet we reſolve them to be reckoned in the ſecond degree; becauſe all are ſought for the ſake of this alone. For our Lord ſaying, Thou art ſolicitous, and art troubled about many things; but there is need (but) of a few, or even One; he placed the Chief Good, not in an actual, though commendable Work, and abounding in many Fruits; but in Contemplation of Himſelf; which is indeed ſimple, and (but) One, *&c.* (*cap.* 8.)

To attend unceſſantly to God and Divine Contemplation, is impoſſible for Man incompaſſed with this Infirmity of the Fleſh. But it behoves us to know, where we ought to have the Intention of our Mind fixed, and to which deſign we may always apply the Proſpect of our Mind, which when it can obtain, it rejoyceth; and from which, being diſtracted, it grieves and ſighs; and doth ſo often feel her ſelf to have departed from her chief Good, as ſhe doth find her

her ſelf ſeparated from that Proſpect, &c. (*cap.* 13.)

Therefore is frequent Reading, and continual Meditation of the Scriptures, that from thence we may have occaſion of remembring Spiritual things. Therefore is frequent Singing of Pſalms, that daily Compunction may thence be obtained. Therefore is Diligence uſed in Watchings, Faſtings, and Prayers, that the Mind, being refined, may not ſavour Earthly things, but contemplate Heavenly: Which again ceaſing, through Negligence creeping in, of neceſſity the Mind, waxing groſs with the Filth of Corruptions, muſt ſink and fall into the Carnal part. (*cap.* 17.) *v. Col.* 9. *cap.* 26.

Abbot Daniel, *concerning the* triple State *of* Souls, *Caſſ. Coll.* 4. *cap.* 19.

ACcording to the Doctrin of the Scripture, there are *Three States of Souls*: the firſt, *Carnal*; the ſecond, *Animal*; the third, *Spiritual*; which we read thus noted-out by the Apoſtle: for concerning *the Carnal* it is ſaid, *I have given you Milk*

Milk to drink, not Meat; for then ye were not able, neither yet indeed are ye; for ye are yet Carnal, 1 Cor. 3. And again; *While there is among you Emulation and Contention, are ye not Carnal? ibid.* Concerning *the Animal*, it is thus mentioned; *The Animal Man perceives not the things of the Spirit of God; it is Fooliſhneſs to him*, 1 Cor. 2. But of *the Spiritual*; *But the Spiritual judgeth all things, but is judged of none. ibid.* And again; *Ye, who are Spiritual, inſtruct thoſe who are of that ſort in a Spirit of Gentleneſs*, Gal. 6. And therefore we muſt be diligent, that when, by our Renunciation, we have ceaſed to be Carnal, *that is*, have begun to ſeparate our ſelves from the Converſation of Worldly People, and to ceaſe from that manifeſt Pollution of the Fleſh, we ſtrive preſently, with all our Might, to acquire the Spiritual State; leſt flattering our ſelves becauſe we ſeem, according to the outward Man, to have renounced the World, or to have forſaken the Contagions of Carnal Fornications, as if by this we had gotten the top of Perfection, we ſhould thenceforth become more remiſs toward the Emundation of other Paſſions, and more ſlothful; and, being detained between both, not be able to attain to the degree of Spiritual Profit; ſuppoſing that it is abundantly ſufficient for us for Perfection, that in the outward Man we ſeem ſeparated from the Converſation and Delights of this

this World; or that we are ſet free from Carnal Corruption and Mixture: And ſo being found in that Tepid State, which is reckoned the *Worſt*, we ſhall underſtand that we are to be vomited out of the Mouth of the Lord, according to his Sentence, ſaying; *I would thou were Hot or Cold; but* (*becauſe*) *thou art now Tepid*, (or Lukewarm) *I will begin to ſpue thee out of my Mouth*, Rev. 3. 15. *&c.*

Abbot Iſaac, *concerning* PRAYER, *Caſſ. Col.* 9.

THE End of every Monk, and Perfection of his Heart, tends to a continual and uninterrupted *Perſeverance in Prayer*, and, as far as is permitted to Humane Frailty, ſtrives after an unmoveable Tranquility, and perpetual Purity of Mind. For the Enjoyment of which we unweariedly ſeek, and continually exerciſe as well Labour of the Body, as Contrition of Spirit: And there is between theſe a certain reciprocal and inſeparable Conjunction. For as the Struc-

ture

cture of all Virtues doth tend to the Perfection of Prayer; ſo unleſs all theſe be bound and compacted together by the toping of it, they can by no means hold out firm and ſtable. For as without them cannot this perpetual and continual Tranquility of Prayer, of which we ſpeak, be acquired and perfected; ſo neither can thoſe Virtues, which prepare for it, without the Continuance of it, be accompliſhed. Wherefore, neither can we rightly treat of the *Effect of Prayer*, or enter to the principal End of it, which is accompliſhed by the Employment of all Virtues, by a haſty Diſcourſe, unleſs firſt all theſe things, which for the obtaining of it are either to be cut off, or to be prepared, be in order enumerated and diſcuſſed; and according to the Inſtruction of the Parable in the Goſpel, thoſe things, which belong to the Building of that Spiritual and more ſublime Tower, be counted and diligently prepared for it. Which, notwithſtanding, will neither profit, being prepared; nor rightly admit thoſe high topings of Perfection to be built upon them, unleſs firſt all refuſe of Vices being caſt out, and all dead rubbiſh of Paſſions dug up, the moſt firm Foundations of *Simplicity* and *Humility* be laid upon the ſound and ſolid Earth of our Heart, that Evangelical Rock, upon which this Tower to be built, with the Employments of all the Spiritual Virtues, may be both unmoveably eſtabliſhed,

bliſhed, and raiſed up to the higheſt Heavens by the Conſiſtence of its own Firmneſs.--- (*cap.* 2.)

And therefore, that the Prayer be made with that Fervour and Purity it ought, theſe things are by all means to be obſerved. *Firſt*, The Solicitude of Earthly things in general, is to be cut off: Next, not only the Care, but not ſo much as the Memory of any Buſineſs or Cauſe is to be admitted: Detractions, idle Talk, much Talk, Jeſtings, are likewiſe alſo to be cut off: Anger above all things, or the Perturbation of Sadneſs, are to be throughly rooted out: The pernicious Food of Carnal Concupiſcence, and the Love of Money, is to be plucked up by the Roots: and theſe and the like Vices, which are viſible even to the Eyes of Men, being cut off and wholly thruſt out, and ſuch a cleanſing of the Rubbiſh, which is perfected in the Purity of Simplicity, (or Singleneſs of Heart) and Innocence firſt made, the unſhaken Foundations of a profound Humility, which may bear a Tower reaching to the Heavens, are firſt to be laid; then is the Superſtruction of Spiritual Virtues to be built upon it; and from all Diſcourſe, (or Reaſoning) and light Wandering, is the Mind to be reſtrained, that ſo it may, by degrees, be elevated to God, and to Spiritual Intuition. For what-ever our Soul conceives before the *Hour of Prayer*, of neceſſity it will occur to us while we pray, by intruſion of our

Remem-

Remembrance. Wherefore, ſuch as we would be found while we Pray, ſuch ought we to prepare our ſelves to be before the time of Prayer. For from the precedent State is the Mind formed in Prayer, &c. (*cap.* 3.)

The Quality of the Soul is not unfitly compared to a light Feather, which, if it be not ſpoiled by ſome wet from without happening to it, by the levity of its own Subſtance, with the help of a gentle Breath, is as it were naturally raiſed up on high, and to the Heavens: But if it be aggravated with the Acceſſion of any wet, it is not only not raiſed up to any Aerial Flights by its natural Mobility, but will be depreſſed down to the very Earth by the weight of the Wet received. So alſo our Mind, if it be not aggravated with contracted Vices and Worldly Cares, or corrupted with the Humour of noxious Luſt, being lifted up, as with the natural Advantage of its Purity, will, with the leaſt Breath of Spiritual Meditation, be elevated on high; and forſaking low and Earthly things, will be tranſported to thoſe which are Heavenly and inviſible. So that we are very properly admoniſhed by our Lord's Precepts: *See that your Hearts be not at any time over-charged with Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, and the Cares of the World*, Luk. 21. 34. And, therefore, if we would our Prayers ſhould pierce, not only the Heavens, but what are above the Heavens, let us take Care

to

to raiſe our Mind purged from all Earthly Corruptions, and cleanſed from all Dregs of Paſſions to its natural Sublimity, that ſo our Prayer may aſcend to God diſ-burthened of all Weight of Corruption. (*cap.* 4.)

The Intention of a Monk ought always to be fixed in God; by whom even a ſmall Separation from that Chief Good is to be accounted a preſent Death, and moſt pernicious Deſtruction. And when the Mind comes to be ſettled in ſuch a Tranquility, or looſed from the tyes of all Carnal Paſſions, and the Intention of the Heart doth moſt tenaciouſly adhere to that One Chief Good, then doth it fulfill that of the Apoſtle; *Pray without Intermiſſion*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 17. and, *In every place lifting up pure Hands without Anger or Diſputings*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. For the Senſe of the Mind, if I may ſo ſay, being drench'd in this Purity, and reformed from the Earthly Filth to a Spiritual and Angelick Likeneſs, what-ever it receives into its ſelf, what-ever it handles, what-ever it doth, will be a moſt pure and ſincere Prayer. (*cap.* 6.)

The *various Species of Prayer*, I judge, cannot be comprehended without mighty Contrition of Heart, Purity of Mind, and Illumination of the Holy Spirit.—— For according to the meaſure of Purity, in which every Soul doth proceed, and the quality of the State, in which, either by Occurrences ſhe is lowered, or by her own

own Induſtry renewed, ſhe her ſelf is every moment new formed. And therefore it is certain, that Prayers are by none always made of the ſame form, &c. (*cap.* 8.)

They who having the penal thorn of Conſcience pluck'd out of their Heart, are *ſecure*, ruminating the Favours and Mercies of the Lord, which he hath either in time paſt given, or at preſent doth give, or hath prepared for the future, with a moſt pure Mind, are tranſported with a moſt fervent Heart to that ardent Prayer, which cannot be expreſſed with the Tongue of Men, or comprehended. Yet ſometimes a Mind, which hath profitted to that true effect of Purity, and hath now begun to be rooted in it, is wont, conceiving all the parts of Prayer at once together, and like an incompreſſible and devouring Flame ſpreading over all, to pour out to God ineffable Prayers of a moſt pure vigour, which the Spirit it ſelf interceeding with inexplicable Groans, we being ignorant, doth ſend forth to God, conceiving in that moment ſo great things, and pouring them out ineffably in Supplication, as it cannot at another time; I will not ſay, repeat with the Mouth, but not ſo much as recollect with the Mind, &c. (*cap.* 15.)

The higher and more ſublime State (of Prayer) is formed by the Contemplation of God alone, and the Fervour of Charity, by which the Soul being caſt down, and melted into Love of

of him, doth very familiarly diſcourſe to God, as its own Father, with a peculiar Devotion. Which State that we ought diligently to deſire, the Form of the LORD's-PRAYER doth inſtruct us, ſaying;

Our Father. When therefore we do confeſs with our own Mouth the God and Lord of the Univerſe to be our Father, we do indeed profeſs our ſelves to be adopted to be the Sons of God out of a State of Slavery: adding thereunto, **who art in Heaven**; that flying from the abode of the preſent Life, which we live upon Earth, with much horror, as a Pilgrimage, and ſeparating us far from our Father, we may haſten rather with our utmoſt deſire to that Region, in which we confeſs our Father liveth; and may admit nothing of that kind which may render us unworthy of this our Profeſſion, and of the Nobility of ſuch an Adoption; or make us incurr his Diſpleaſure: To which Order and Degree being promoted, we ſhall continually be inflamed with that Devotion, which is in good Children, that now we ſhall imploy all our Affection, not for our Commodities, but for the Glory of our Father. Saying to Him, **hollowed be thy Name**, &c. (*cap.* 18.)

And after a brief but excellent Explication of all the parts of this Prayer, he adds:

You ſee therefore, what Model and Form of Prayer is propoſed to us by the Judge himſelf,

who is to be intreated by it; in which is no Petition of *Riches*, no Remembrance of *Dignities*, no Prayer for *Power* or *Strength*, no mention of *Corporal Needs*, or of *Temporal Life* contained. The Creator of Eternity will have nothing fading, nothing vile, nothing temporal, to be implored of him. And therefore he will do a very great Injury to his Magnificence and Munificence, who-ever passing by the Petition of Eternal things, will rather ask any thing transitory or fading; and by the Vileness or Meanness of his Prayer, will rather incurr the Offence, than obtain the Favour of his Judge. (*cap.* 24.)

This Prayer therefore, though it may seem to contain all plenitude of Perfection, because either instituted or established by the Authority of our Lord himself, yet doth it promote those of his Family to that higher State, which we mentioned before, and lead them, in a more eminent degree, to that fervent, ineffable Prayer, known or experienced by very few, which transcending all humane Sense, is not distinctly delivered by any manner of Words or Expressions, but which the Mind, illustrated by the infusion of that Cœlestial Light, doth, not signifie by humane and narrow Eloquence, but pour out abundantly, as out of a full Fountain, in full compacted Senses, and ineffably utter to the Lord, producing so great things in that little point of time, as the Mind can neither easily utter, nor recover-

recovering it ſelf particularly remember. (*cap.* 25.)

And that you may perceive the Affection of a true Prayer, I will produce to you, not my own, but St. *Antony*'s Senſe of it: Whom we have known to have ſometimes ſo perſiſted in Prayer, that he frequently praying in an Exceſs of Mind, when the Sun began to riſe, we have heard him, in fervour of Spirit, cry out; *Why doſt thou hinder me, O Sun, who doſt now riſe to withdraw me from the Splendor of this true Light?* Whoſe alſo was this Cœleſtial and more than humane Sentence, concerning the End of Prayer: *It is not* (ſaith he) *Perfect Prayer, in which a Monk doth underſtand* * *even this it ſelf that he prayeth.* (*cap.* 31.)

They only with moſt pure Eyes do behold the Divinity of Jeſus, who aſcending from low and Earthly Works and Thoughts, do retire with him into the high Mount of Solitude; who being free from the Tumult of all Earthly Thoughts and Perturbations, and ſeparate from all mixture of Vices, elevated with a moſt pure Faith, and Eminence of Virtues, doth reveal the Glory of his Countenance and the Image of his

* By Prayer, *theſe Men underſtand an Elevation of the Soul to God; and they who have obſerved how much the Soul may be affected and taken up in the Contemplation of much inferior Objects, will not ſo confidently cenſure this, though they never had Experience of any ſuch thing in themſelves. It is no more than* Plato *hath ſaid of* Oratory in Menon.

Clarity to those, who are meet to behold Him with pure Aspects of Soul, &c. (*Coll.* 10. *c.* 6.)

This is *the Design of a Solitary*, this ought to be all his Intention, that he may come to possess in this Body an Image of future Beatitude, and begin in this Vessel to fore-tast the Earnest of Heavenly Conversation and Glory. This, I say, is the End of all Perfection, that the Mind, so extenuated (or refined) from all Carnal Dust, may be daily elevated to Spiritual things, till all its Conversation, all its volutation of Heart, may become one continual Prayer. *And, as I said a little before:* All our Love, all our Desire, all our Study, all our Endeavour, all our Cogitation, all that we see, all that we speak, all that we hope, may be God; and that Unity which now is of the Father with the Son, and of the Son with the Father, may be transfused into our Sense and Minds; *that is*, that as he loves us with a pure and indissoluble Charity, we also may be joyned to Him in a perpetual and inseparable Charity. (*cap.* 7.)

For the Attaining and Practice of this, he recommends, from Experience of the Seniors, the continual or frequent mental repetion of that verse, Psal. 70. Deus in adjutorium meum intende; Domine ad adjuvandum me festina; *in our Liturgy*, **O God make speed to save us: O Lord make haste to help us**: *and largely shews the use of it at all times, and upon all special occasions.*

Abbot

Abbot Theodore, *concerning the* right Knowledge *of the* Scriptures, *Caſſian. lib.* 5.

HE was indowed with very great Sanctity and compleat Science, not only in the *Active Life*, but alſo in the *Knowledge of the Scriptures*: which he acquired, not ſo much by Study of Reading, or Humane Learning, as by Purity of Heart: for he could hardly either underſtand or pronounce ſo much as a few *Greek* Words. When he ſought the Explanation of a certain obſcure Queſtion, he perſiſted indefatigably in Prayer ſeven Days and Nights, until he knew the Solution of the Queſtion propoſed, by the Revelation of the Lord. (*cap.* 33.)

When certain of the Brethren, admiring his eminent Light of Knowledge, *inquired of him the Senſe of certain Scriptures; he ſaid*, A Monk deſiring *to attain to the Knowledge of the Scriptures*, ought by no means to imploy his Pains upon Books of Commentators, but rather reſtrain and keep all the Induſtry of his Mind and bent of his Heart to the purifying of his Carnal Affecti-

ons; which being expell'd, preſently the Eyes of his Mind, the Veil of his Paſſions being once removed, will begin as it were naturally to contemplate the Myſteries of the Scriptures. For they are not publiſhed to us by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, that they ſhould be unintelligible and obſcure; but they become obſcure by our Fault, the veil of Sins over-clouding the Eyes of our Mind; which being again reſtored to their Natural Sanity, the Reading of the Holy Scriptures will even alone abundantly ſuffice to the Contemplation of true Knowledge; nor will they need the Inſtructions of Commentaries, as their Eyes of Fleſh need the Doctrin of none to ſee, if they be free from Suffuſion and Dimneſs of Sight. For therefore is there ſo great Variety and Errors ariſen amongſt Interpreters themſelves, becauſe the moſt running to Interpret them, without uſing any Diligence toward the Purgation of the Mind, by reaſon of the Groſsneſs or Uncleanneſs of their Heart, thinking things divers or contrary, either to Faith, or to themſelves, they could not comprehend the Light of Truth. (*cap.* 34.)

For this ſee in Smith's Select Diſcourſes, *The true Way and Method of attaining to Divine Knowledge.*

Abbot

Abbot Serapion *of* Diſcretion, *Caſſ. Coll.* 2. *cap.* 11.

WHEN I was a Child, and lived with Abbot *Theon*, this brutiſh Cuſtom was impoſed upon me by the Enemy, that after I had eaten with him at the ninth hour, I did every day ſecretly convey one Bisket into my Boſom, which I did after, without his knowledge, eat in ſecret. Which Theft, though I did conſtantly, through my accuſtomed Incontinence, commit; yet when I had gratified my Appetite, coming to my ſelf, I was more tormented with the Guilt of my Theft, than ſatisfied with what I had eaten. And when I was every day compelled, to the grief of my Heart, to perform that moſt troubleſome work, impoſed, as it were, by *Pharaoh*'s Task-Maſters inſtead of Bricks upon me, nor could extricate my ſelf from this their moſt cruel Tyranny, and was aſhamed and confounded to diſcover the ſecret Theft to my Senior; it came to paſs, by the Hand of God, who was pleaſed to reſcue me out of the Yoak of this Captivity, that certain Brothers deſired to come to the Cell of the Senior for Edification ſake. And when they were refreſhed, and a Spiritual Conference was begun, the Senior anſwering to their Queſtions

diſcourſed of the Vice of *Gaſtrimargy*, or Gluttony, and of the Domination (and Slavery) of Thoughts kept ſecret, and did explain their Nature and moſt diſmal Power ſo long as they were concealed: I by the power of this Conference being prick'd, and terrified with an accuſing Conſcience, as believing that theſe things were ſpoken for that Cauſe, that the Lord had revealed the Secrets of my Heart to the Senior, I began firſt ſecretly to ſigh; then, the Compunction of my Heart increaſing, breaking out into Sighs and Tears, I pull'd the Bisket, which by that evil Cuſtom I had ſecretly ſtolen to eat, out of my Boſom, where it was conceal'd, and proferring it to them, I did proſtrate upon the ground with Supplication for Pardon, confeſs how I did every day eat in ſecret, and with abundance of Tears did implore them to beg my Abſolution from this hard Bondage of the Lord. Then ſaid the Senior; "Be of good Comfort, "Child; Thy Confeſſion hath obtained thy "Abſolution, though I hold my Tongue: For "thou haſt this day gotten the Victory of thine "Enemy, more powerfully beating him down "by thy Confeſſion, than thou thy ſelf wert caſt "down by him through thy Concealment. "Whom not at all checking either by thy own "or any others Reprehenſion, thou didſt ſuffer "to domineer over thee till now. But now, "after this thy Confeſſion, that wicked Spirit

"ſhall

"ſhall not be able to diſquiet thee; nor ſhall the "filthy Serpent any longer hold a hiding place "in thee, being drawn-out into the Light, out "of the Darkneſs of thy Heart, by a ſalutary "Confeſſion. The Senior had not finiſhed theſe Words, and behold a Burning Lamp, proceeding from my ſide, ſo filled the Cell with the ſmell of Brimſtone, that the Stink of it would not ſuffer us to remain in it. And the Senior reſuming his Admonition; "Behold, ſaith he, our "Lord hath viſibly proved to thee the Truth "of my Words, that thou ſhouldeſt ſee with "thy Eyes the Inſtigator of thy Affection driven "out of thy Heart by a ſalubrious Confeſſion; "and ſhouldſt know that the detected Enemy "ſhould no longer at all have place in thee, by "his manifeſt Expulſion. And ſo it is, according to the Sentence of the Senior, the Domination of that diabolical Tyranny in me is, by the Virtue of this Confeſſion extinct, and for ever layed; ſo that the Enemy never after attempted to inject ſo much as the memory of this Concupiſcence, nor have I ever after felt my ſelf aſſaulted by any Inſtigation of that thieviſh deſire.

In this manner therefore may we moſt eaſily come to the Science of *true Diſcretion*, if following the tract of the Seniors, we preſume neither to act any thing new, nor to determin it by our own Judgment; but walk in all things as their Tra-

Tradition, or Probity of Life ſhall inform us. In which Inſtitution being ſettled, any one may, not only come to the perfect reaſon of Diſcretion, but remain ſafe againſt all the Snares of the Enemy. For by no other Vice doth the Devil draw a Religious perſon ſo headlong to Deſtruction, as when he doth perſwade him, neglecting the Advice of the Seniors, to confide in his own Judgment, and Determination or Doctrin. For ſince all Arts and Diſciplines found out by humane Ingenie, and which are of no more benefit than for the Commodities of this temporal Life, though they may be handled with the Hand, and ſeen with the Eyes, yet can they not rightly be comprehended by any one without the Teaching of an Inſtructor; How improper is it to believe that this only ſhould not need a Teacher, which is inviſible and occult, and which is not ſeen through but with a moſt pure Heart, wherein an Error produceth not a temporal Damage, nor what is eaſily repaired, but perdition of Soul, and perpetual Death? For it hath a Conflict Day and Night, not againſt viſible, but inviſible Enemies; and not againſt one or two, but againſt innumerable troops, a Spiritual Combat, the Caſe of which is ſo much the more pernicious to all, by how much both the Enemy is more miſchievous, and the Encounter more ſecret. And therefore is the Trace of the Seniors always to be followed with the utmoſt Diligence,

Diligence, and to them are all things, which arise in our Hearts, taking away the Veil of Bashfulness, to be related. (*cap.* 11.) *v. sup.* p. 79.

Abbot Cheremon, *concerning the Wonderful things which the Lord doth, in a special manner, operate in his Saints,* Cass. Coll. 12. cap. 12.

GREAT indeed and wonderful are the things, nor throughly known to any Man, except only to those who have experience of them, which the Lord with ineffable Liberality gives to his Faithful ones, even in this Vessel of Corruption. Which the Prophet viewing in Purity of Mind, as well in his own Person, as in the Person of those, who come into this State and Affection, cryed out; *Great are thy Works; and that my Soul knoweth very well.* Otherwise could not the Prophet be thought to have said any rare or great matter, if he be thought to have pronounced this either with other affection of Heart, or concerning other Works of God: For there is no Man, who doth not acknowledge the Works of God to be wonderful, even from the very Vastness of the Creation. But of those things,

things, which by his daily Operation he doth produce in his Saints, and with a ſpecial Bounty doth pour out unto them, no other can be ſenſible but the Soul of them who enjoy it, which, in the ſecret of its Conſcience, is ſo the only Judge of his Favours, that it not only cannot with any Speech relate them, but not ſo much as in Senſe and Thought comprehend them; when deſcending from that inflamed Fervour, it ſinks down to material and terrene Proſpects. For, Who would not admire the Works of God in himſelf, when he ſees the inſatiable *Greedineſs* of the Stomach, and the coſtly and pernicious *Luxury* of the Palate, ſo reſtrained in Him, that he ſeldom (and unwillingly) takes ſcarce ſo much as a little, and that very mean Food? Who would not be amazed at the Works of God, when he feels that fire of *Luſt*, which he before believed to be natural, and in a manner inextinguiſhable, to become ſo cool'd, that he doth not feel himſelf incited ſo much as with a ſimple motion of his Body? How could any but revere the Power of the Lord, when he ſhould ſee Men, before fierce and deſperate, who were provoked even by officious (or well-meant) Services to the greateſt Fury of *Anger*, to have come to ſo great Lenity and Gentleneſs, that now they not only are not moved with any Injuries, but even, when any are done them, do with great magnanimity rejoyce? Who would not plainly admire

mire the Works of God, and with his whole Heart cry out, *I have known that great is the Lord*, when he ſeeth himſelf or another of *Greedy*, become Liberal; of *Prodigal*, Frugal; of *Proud*, Humble; of *Nice* and *Curious*, Carleleſs and Homely; and even chooſingly enjoying Want and Scarcity of temporal things? Theſe indeed are the wonderful Works of God, which the Souls of the Prophets and ſuch (experienced Perſons) do know in a peculiar manner, being amazed with the Intuition of ſo wonderful a Contemplation. Theſe are the Prodigies which the Lord hath plac'd upon Earth, which the ſame Prophet conſidering, calls all People to the admiration of them: *Come and ſee the Works of God, the Prodigies which the Lord hath placed upon the Earth*, &c. For what can be a greater Prodigy, then, in a very little moment, for Men of *greedy Publicans*, to become Apoſtles; of *fierce Perſecutors*, moſt patient Preachers of the Goſpel, ſo as to propagate that *Faith*, which they did perſecute, even with the Effuſion of their Blood. Theſe are the Works of God, which the Son declares that he, with the Father, daily doth work, &c. Concerning this ſaving Work of God, the Prophet prays to the Lord, ſaying; *Confirm, O God, this which thou haſt wrought in us.* And, to paſs by abſcondite Diſpenſations of God, which the Mind of all the Saints doth every moment perceive peculiarly exerciſed

exerciſed within themſelves, that Cœleſtial Infuſion of Spiritual Rejoycings, in which a dejected Mind is raiſed with the Alacrity of an unexpected Joy, and thoſe unknown Exceſſes of Heart, and as ineffable as unheard-of Solaces of Joys; with which ſometimes drooping in a liſtleſs Stupidity, we are raiſed, as out of a deep Sleep, to moſt fervent Prayer; this, I ſay, is the Joy of which the bleſſed Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Which Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor hath come into the Heart of Man*; that is, of him, who is ſtill a Man ſtupified with Earthly Vices, and ſticks in Humane Affections, and perceives nothing of thoſe Gifts of God. At laſt the ſame Apoſtle adds, as well concerning himſelf, as thoſe like him, who have departed from Humane Converſation; *But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.* v. *Cyp. Ep.* 2.

THeſe things I thought fit to collect out of much of this kind, to give a Taſt of the Manners *and* Spirit *of theſe* Holy People: *and leſt thoſe who are little acquainted with theſe things ſhould imagin that they were the meer Phanſies of* Melancholy Monks; *I will here add a Taſt of the Sentiments of ſome others; and inſtead of many, of two Eminent Biſhops, Men of greateſt Reputation both for* Learning *and* Virtue; *St.* Gregory Nazianzen, *and St.* Auſtin, *Biſhop of* Hippo: *But firſt to begin with St.* Gregory Nazianzen, *it will not be amiſs to add here, to thoſe before,* his Character of the Holy Monks of his time. *St.*

St. Gregory Nazianzen, *concerning the* Lives *and* Exerciſes *of* MONKS *in his time.*

Orat. 9. to *Julian*, the Comptroller of the Cuſtoms, *upon the Diſcharge of the* Monks.

MY Speech preſents to you the *Poor*, the whole *Choir of Prieſts*, the *Choir of Philoſophers*, [*Monks*] who are tied down by no Band; who poſſeſs only their Bodies, nor them wholly; have nothing for *Cæſar*, but all for *God*; Hymns, Prayers, Watchings, Tears, a Poſſeſſion not to be ſeized on, *viz.* to be dead to the World, alive to Chriſt; to have *killed* the Fleſh; to have drawn the Soul from the Body: Sparing theſe, or rather purely reſtoring to God the Worſhippers and *Diſciples* of God, and *Contemplators* of Cœleſtial things, the firſt Fruits of our kind, the Pillar, the Crown of Faith, the precious Pearls, the Stones of that Temple whoſe Foundation and Corner Stone is *Chriſt*, the noble Accompliſhments of the Church; moſt nobly indeed, both for them, and for thy ſelf, and for us all haſt thou taken Care. And ſuch Riches ſhould I rather

wiſh

wiſh thee from us, than Treaſure of much Gold and Silver now appearing, and after a little while not being at all.

But what he obſerved in them, he elſe-where expreſſeth more copiouſly, as with great Approbation, Applauſe, and even Admiration, in theſe Particulars; Watchings, Faſtings, Prayers, Tears, brawny Knees, knockings of the Breaſt, deep Sighs, nocturnal Stations, travel of the Soul to God, ſoft Weepings at Prayers, a Medicine of Compunction to thoſe who hear it; Singing, Glorifying, Meditating on the Law of the Lord day and night; carrying Exaltations of God in their Mouths: And alſo thoſe noble Teſtimonials and Indications of a Life according to God, ſilent Preachers: Hair foul and uncombed; Feet naked, and like the Apoſtles, wearing nothing dead; decent Shaving; Rayment reproving Arrogance; a Girdle becoming an undeck'd Body, keeping the Coat from hanging looſe, but ſo as though it did not gird it; an even Pace; an unwandering Eye; a pleaſing ſort, or rather powerful way of Smiling, which checks the Exceſs of Laughter; Diſcourſe guided by Reaſon; Silence more venerable than Speech; Commendations ſeaſoned with Salt, not to flatter, but to excite to Proficience; a ſort of Reproving, more deſirable than Praiſe; a Mean in Compunction and Relaxation, and a Mixture and Temperature of both Lenity with Authority,

and

and Authority with Modeſty, ſo that neither is debaſed, but rather recommended by the other; due Meaſures of Converſe and Retirement; of Converſe, to help others; of Retirement, to get inſight into the Myſteries of the Spirit; a Converſe preſerving Solitude (or Recollection) in Society; and Retirement retaining Brotherly-kindneſs and Charity in Solitude: And which are yet Greater and Sublimer things than theſe: Riches in Poverty; Poſſeſſion in Pilgrimage; Glory in Diſgrace; Power in Weakneſs; Fruitfulneſs in Celebacie, if Divine Off-ſprings be better than what have beginning from the Fleſh. They are ſuch as live deliciouſly, by refuſing Delights; and Mean, for the ſake of Heavenly things; have nothing in the World, and (yet) are above the World; who are out of the Fleſh, and (yet) in the Fleſh. Whoſe Portion is the Lord; who are Poor, for the ſake of a Kingdom, and Kings for their Poverty. Theſe, my Wealth and Banquets, while preſent, made me exult for Joy; and if abſent, ſtopp'd the briſk Circulation of my Blood.

Thus far his Character of theſe Holy Men: And now for a Taſt of his Contemplation, of which we have a Touch here, where he ſets out the End of Retirement, *to get Inſight into the* Myſteries of the Spirit.

St. Gregory Nazianzen, *concerning* Divine Contemplation. *Orat.* 42.

I *Will Stand*, ſaith the admirable *Habakkuk*, *upon my Watch*; and I with him to day upon the *Power* and *Speculation* given me by the Holy Ghoſt, and will contemplate and know what is ſhewed, and what is ſpoken to me.—

I being to ſpeak of the great Sacrifice, and of the greateſt of Days, cannot but have recourſe to God. Here will I begin, and purge ye me your Mind, and Hearing, and Underſtanding, who-ever reliſh theſe things; for as much as a Speech of God is Divine; ſo ſhall ye depart with a Savour of things which do not fade.—

God *Was* always, and *Is*, and *Shall be*; or rather *Is* always: For *Was*, and *Shall be*, are fragments of Time with us, and of a fading Nature. But he always *Is*, and ſo doth he name Himſelf, ſpeaking to *Moſes* in the Mount. For he containing All in Himſelf hath a Being neither beginning, nor ceaſing, as a certain Ocean of Eſſence, immenſe and boundleſs, exceeding all conception

conception both of Time and Nature, repreſented with the Mind alone, and that but very faintly and obſcurely, not from what are in Him, but from what are about Him, one Conception being collected after another into ſome one Image of the Truth, flying before it be laid-hold-on, and running away before it be apprehended, *illuſtrating only the Principal part of us*, and that *purified*, as the Lightning ſtrikes the Sight without remaining; that, as it ſeems to me, he may with what is comprehenſible draw us to Himſelf; (for what is altogether incomprehenſible, is neither hoped nor attempted) and with what is incomprehenſible, may become admired; being admired, may be the more deſired; being deſired, may *purifie* us; and purifying, make us *Dei-form* or God-like: and theſe things perfected, he may, as with Familiars, *converſe* with us, *God* to God's united and made known, *&c.*

To make this remarkable Diſcourſe the more plain and intelligible, it may be fit and neceſſary to add ſome brief Notes out of the Greek *Commentators*, Nicetas *and* Pſellus, *upon it.*

The Senſe of the Prophet's Words is this: I will keep my Mind Pure and Intire from all Worldly Care, and will fly into a certain Security very firm, and as a Thought raiſed on high: and thence will I obſerve what God will ſpeak to me, *&c. Nicetas, n.* 1.

Stand ſignifies Firmneſs and Conſtancy, and a State unmoved, and unmoveable to meaner things; *Speculate* an accurate and agreeable Contemplation and Knowledge, and that *Impetus* (or Earneſtneſs) wherewith the Mind is carried to thoſe things which come to our Knowledge. For ſo he, who doth emerge out of the Groſſneſs of corporal things, at firſt goes the middle way, which is called *Animal*; but afterward the more ſublime, which is called *Spiritual*. *Pſell.*

The *Watch* (or Guard) is the Manner of every ones Soul, according to which he doth receive Divine Viſions in a certain proportion. For if any one ſhall raiſe himſelf by higher Contemplation, he will err. He calls it *Power*, becauſe every Soul raiſed up to a Divine Simplicity, and converſing immediately with Divine Viſions themſelves, uſeth thoſe kind of Sights freely, and according to this Power, condeſcending to the Capacity of his Auditors, *&c.* He calls it *Speculation*, becauſe the Soul doth not meaſure Divine Viſions by the Will, but by the Intellective Faculty and Meaſure of its Purgation. *Pſell.* 9.

What the *Sun* is in Senſibles, that *God* is in Intellectuals: For as It doth illuminate the viſible World, He doth in like manner the Inviſible. Moreover, as It makes thoſe, who look upon it, bright; ſo He makes them Divine and Deiform. *Nicetas.* The

The Preſence of *Spiritual Light* and *Divine Splendor* converts the Mind of thoſe, who are judg'd worthy of ſuch a Glory and Contemplation, from many and various Opinions and Imaginations to that which truly is, that is to God, &c. *Nicetas.*

For what the *Eye* is in the Body, this the *Mind* is in the Soul. As therefore to behold the Lightning when it breaks out, there is need of *good Eyes:* ſo alſo for this, that we may be illuſtrated by the Contemplation of God, is required a *Pure and Sound Mind.* For as in a Looking-Glaſs ſordid and impure, the Form of a Face cannot be repreſented; ſo neither in a foul and unclean Mind, the Splendor of God. *Ni*

Whoever, knowing that they are only Mind, have paſſed the bulk and groſſneſs of the Body,— and have *purged* their Mind from the Stain of Vices, and rendered it fit and meet for the Reception of the Firſt (or chief) Mind and Creator of all things, God is *united* to them. For when the Mind is *Pure* and Incorrupt, he doth converſe with the Mind without any thing intervening, and by it hath Communion with the Soul, as again by this he is joyned to the Body. But he is united, not as He is, but as We are capable of that Union. And hence at laſt he becomes known: Nor can any one otherwiſe know God, unleſs he open his Soul to Him, and receive him in it. *Pſellus.*

God doth ſo much *become known* to Men, as he is *familiarly joyned* to them, who by Vertue are joyned to Him. For according as is their *Aſcent* he doth deſcend. And how much Man doth approach to God, ſo much alſo doth God become known to Man, imparting the Knowledge of himſelf according to the proportion of *Purity* that is in every one.

See whether the *Spiritual and Divine Gradation* will raiſe us. For from the *Incomprehenſibility* of the Divine Nature, as from the firſt ſtep of a Ladder, we are raiſed to *Admiration* of him, as to the ſecond ſtep: again, from Admiration we aſcend to more *earneſt Deſire*: then from Deſire are we raiſed up to *Purgation*: and from hence, further to *Likeneſs with God*: and, laſtly, we arrive to *converſe familiarly* with God, and know Him more perfectly by *Union*. Then, when we are made Deiform, doth the true and natural God *converſe familiarly* with thoſe, who by Grace are call'd Gods, infuſing the Divine Fulgers of his Knowledge in us as every one is purified. *Nicetas.*

To be made God, is to be *partaker of Divine Illumination*; but not to paſs into the Divine Eſſence.— Since we are ſet in the Confines between God and Matter, if we decline to Matter, we are Groſs and Material; if we tend toward God, we are call'd Divine, and thereupon Gods. *Nicetas.*

St.

St. Auſtin *concerning the ſame.*

THE Life of the Body, is the Soul; the Life of the Soul, is God. The Spirit of God dwells in the Soul, and by the Soul in the Body, that our Bodies alſo may be the Temple of the Holy Spirit, whom we have from God. *Ser.* 18. *de verb. Apoſt. c.* 6.

It is not unreaſonable to ſay, That the Incorporeal Soul is ſo illuminated with the Incorporeal Light of the Simple (or pure) Wiſdom of God, as the Body of the Air is illuminated with the Corporeal Light, and as the Air grows dark upon the departure of that Light. 11 *de Civ. Dei, c.* 10.

Minds are to *Souls* as their *Senſes*; but of Sciences whatever things are *moſt certain*, they are ſuch as are thoſe things which are illuſtrated or ſhined upon by the Sun, that they may be ſeen, as the Earth and all Earthly things. But *God* is he who doth illuſtrate; but I *Reaſon* am ſo in Mind, as the *Aſpect* is in the *Eyes*. The *Eye of the Soul* is the *Mind*, pure from all ſtain of the Body, that is, remote and purged from all deſires of Mortal things, *&c.* 1 *Soliloq. c.* 6.

It is a great and very rare thing, with the Intenſeneſs of the Mind to tranſcend all Creature,

corporeal or incorporeal, being conſidered and found mutable, and to approach to that unchangeable Subſtance of God, and there learn from Him, that none but he made all Nature, which is not Himſelf. For ſo God ſpeaks with Man, not by any corporal Creature ſounding in corporal Ears, &c. but he ſpeaks by the very Truth it ſelf, if one be fit to hear with the Mind, not with the Body. 11 *de C. D. 2. v. ibid. Coq.*

When the Soul ſees that ſingular and true Beauty, it will the more love it. But unleſs it fix on it its Eye with a mighty Love, and decline not any whether from beholding it, it cannot remain in that moſt Bleſſed Viſion. 1 *Solil. c. 7.*

One thing there is that I can preſcribe thee: I know no more. That theſe *ſenſible things* are wholly to be *forſaken*; and that we muſt greatly beware while we act this Body, that our Wings, which we need have intire and perfect, be not hindered by any of their Birdlime, that we may fly away from this Darkneſs, to that Light, &c. Therefore, when thou ſhalt be ſuch, that nothing of Earthly things doth at all delight thee, believe me, in that moment, in the ſame point of time, thou ſhalt ſee what thou deſireſt, &c. 1 *Soliloq. c. 14.*

Thou doſt deſire to ſee and imbrace *Wiſdom* as it were *naked*, without any thing of covering, ſo as ſhe doth not ſuffer herſelf, except to very few and her moſt choice Lovers, &c. It is a certain

certain ineffable and incomprehenſible Light of Minds: that vulgar Light, *&c. ibid. c.* 13.

Confide conſtantly in God, and as much as thou canſt commit thy ſelf intirely to Him. Do not be willing to be as it were thine own, but profeſs thy ſelf to be a Servant of the moſt Gracious and Bountiful Lord. For ſo will he not ceaſe to raiſe thee to Himſelf, and will permit nothing to befall thee, but what ſhall profit thee, though thou knoweſt it not. 1 *Soliloq.* 14.

Hear me, my God, hear me after that manner of thine *known to very few.*— Command, I beſeech thee, whatever thou wilt, but heal and open my Ears, that I may hear thy Voice: Heal and open my Eyes, that I may ſee thy Becks.— Say to me, which way I ſhall look that I may behold Thee, *&c.* 1 *Soliloq. c.* 1.

Being admoniſhed to return to my ſelf, I entred into my moſt inward parts, thou being my Leader: and I could do it, becauſe thou waſt become my Helper. I entred, and I diſcerned with the Eye of my Soul, ſuch as it was, above the ſame Eye of my Soul, above my Mind, *the unchangeable Light of the Lord*; not this vulgar, and viſible to all Fleſh. Nor was it as of the ſame kind greater, as if it grew more and more clear than it, and filled all with its Greatneſs. This was not that, but another, quite another from all thoſe. Nor was it ſo above my Mind, as Oyl above Water, nor as

Heaven

Heaven above Earth; but ſuperior, becauſe he made me; and I inferior, becauſe I was made by it. He who knoweth Truth, knoweth it: and he who knoweth it, knoweth Eternity. Charity knoweth it. O Eternal Truth, and true Charity, and dear Eternity. Thou art my God; for Thee do I ſigh day and night. And when I firſt knew Thee thou didſt aſſume me, (or take me up) that I ſhould ſee it to be which I did ſee; and my ſelf not to be, who did ſee. And thou didſt beat back my weak Sight, ſhining vehemently upon me; and I trembled with Love and Horror, and found my ſelf to be far from Thee in the Region of Diſſimilitude, (or Unlikeneſs) as if I heard thy *Voice* from on high; *I am the Food of grown Perſons; grow, and thou ſhalt feed on me. Nor ſhalt thou change me into thee, as the Food of thy Fleſh; but thou ſhalt be changed into me.* And I know that for Iniquity thou doſt tutor Men, and makeſt my Soul to pine away like a Spider. And I ſaid, *Is Truth nothing, becauſe it is diffuſed, neither through finite, nor through infinite ſpaces?* And thou cryedſt from a far, *Yes indeed,* I AM THAT I AM. And I heard, as it is heard in the heart; and there was no cauſe of doubt at all left; and I could eaſilier doubt that I was alive, than that Truth was not, which is ſeen being underſtood by the things which are made. *7 Confeſſ. c.* 10.

More

More to this purpoſe might be noted out of theſe, and others of great Authority in the Chriſtian Church; though it may be obſerved that anciently the Chriſtians, as well as the Jews and Heathens, were very cautious not to expreſs the Myſteries of their Religion to the Prophane, or to ſuch as were not capable, according to our Saviour's Admonition, *Mat.* 7. 6. and out of that caution, and a like caution to avoid all Oſtentation and ſecure their Humility, were more ſparing in their Expreſſions of any thing of this nature in their Writings, than thoſe of after-Ages, who, by degrees, began to write more openly, and at laſt to compoſe whole Books of what was before taught more ſecretly to particular Perſons, as they were capable to receive it; but this is ſufficient for the preſent.

By this Taſt of the *Spirit of theſe Holy People*, together with the Teſtimonies of ſuch Excellent Perſons as were contempory with them, and well acquainted with their *Manners* and *Exerciſes*, we may judge of the Raſhneſs and Inconſiderateneſs of many of later times, who have made no ſcruple to deſpiſe, vilifie, and reproach the *Monaſtick State* in general; and the Impiety and Wickedneſs of ſuch as have induſtriouſly endeavoured to rake up all the Dirt, and raiſe all the Calumnies and Slanders they could againſt them. If the Abuſes and Corruptions, which in later times have increaſed among

among them, were ſuch as might provoke the Indignation of Men and Judgments of God upon them, muſt the whole State from the beginning be condemned for them? If the Serpent caſt out a Flood of falſe and Hypocritical Pretenders, ſuch as thoſe deſcribed by *Piammon* before, *pag.* 59. and *Hierom*, *pag.* 65. called *Sarabites* and *Remoboth*, to drown and obſcure the Excellence of thoſe who were ſincere, doth it become Chriſtians to help the Serpent in that attempt? *There are alſo* (ſaith St. *Auſtin*) *who are falſe Monks, and we have known ſuch*; ſed non periit Fraternitas Pia propter eos, qui profitentur quod non ſunt; *But the Pious Fraternity is not therefore loſt becauſe of thoſe, who profeſs themſelves to be what they are not*, in *Pſal.* 132. and in divers other places he notes ſuch a mixture among them; and the Unreaſonableneſs of thoſe, who cenſure all for the Miſcarriages of ſome. Should we judge of *Epiſcopacy* by the Actions of too many of that Order, which might be noted even from the time of *Diotrephes*, but eſpecially after they became not only ſecure, but greatly honoured by Chriſtian Princes and Emperours; or of the *Reformed Churches*, by what hath been acted by ſome amongſt them; or even of *Chriſtianity*, by the Lives and Manners of too many call'd Chriſtians; how unreaſonable would that be?

If

If we look into the more ancient times, we shall find them admired even by Jews and Heathens, and censured and condemned by none but Infidels, Heretieks, and Apostates. Only one *SYNESIUS* is set up against the concurrent Judgment of all the Great Lights of the Church, *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Nazianzen*, *Chrysostom*, *Ambrose*, *Austin*, and innumerable more. And who is this *Synesius*? A Bishop indeed, and a Learned Philosopher; but as a Learned Doctor of this Church, and no Friend to Enthusiasm, hath observed, a better Platonist than sound Christian; one who lived among them, and yet very ignorant of what was most considerable in them; one who passeth a harsh Censure of them, and yet in it gives a remarkable Testimony for them. He knew indeed what every Rustick could take notice of, that they practised themselves, and recommended to others, *Temperance*, and *Continence*, and great *Austerities*; and thereof he is an unexceptionable Witness; but the reason thereof he knew not; and therefore calls their Way of Living Barbarous, Adamantine, and contrary to Humane Nature; an ample Testimony rightly understood. He knew their diligent *Labour* and *Works*, and what was said concerning their continual *Contemplation* of Divine things: and thereof is an undeniable Witness; but how that was consistent with twisting of Reeds and making of Baskets,

that

that he could not conceive. He knew that they had great regard to *Motions*, *Impulses*, *Transports*, &c. and thereof he is a competent Witness; but what to make of them he knew not; and therefore thought that they did thereby hope for the End without the Means. He knew that they were very confident of their *Knowledge of Divine things*; and thereof he is a sufficient Witness; but what they were he understood not; nor how they should attain any such Knowledge without Learning and Study; and therefore thought they did very arrogantly assume to themselves a greater Measure of Divine Knowledge than others had. And what wonder if he, who did not believe all the known Articles of the *Christian Faith*, should be no more acquainted with such Mysteries and Secrets in Spiritual things, as are by the Wisdom of God hid from the Wise and Prudent, but revealed unto Babes, than some of our Learned Doctors are at this time? Undoubtedly had those great Men, mentioned before, no way inferior to this in any part of Learning, understood no more of these things than he did, they had been of his Mind; or had he understood as much as they, he had been of theirs. And so much for *Synesius*, a very competent Witness of what he knew in this Case, but a most incompetent Judge of what he understood not.

If

If we come nearer to our own times, and inquire into the State of the Monaſteries at the time of the Diſſolution, "*Stow* the Hiſtorian "writing of the Year 1536. 28. *Hen.* 8. ſays, "*The Poor did much lament the Downfall of Mo-*"*naſteries, for the great Hoſpitality which was* "*kept there.* And it is certain, that *till after* "*the Diſſolution of Monaſteries there was no Law* "*in* England *to enforce any Man to pay to the* "*Relief of the Poor by way of Temporal Coercion.* "The *Stat.* of *Ed.* 1. call'd the *Stat. de Aſpor-*"*tatis Religioſorum*, recites it to be one chief "End of building *Monaſteries*, that Hoſpitality "and Almſgiving might be exerciſed, and the "Sick and Feeble maintained. The *Clergy* then "ſcarce pretending themſelves to be *Proprietors*, "but rather *Uſu-Fructuarii:* and as Mr. *Selden* "ſaith, that *Parſonages* and *Vicarages* were *Ele-*"*moſynæ Laicorum*; ſo it ſeems they were uſed "as a kind of Reſerve for the Laity, when they "fell into Poverty again, *that is*, the Surplus was "ſo: for there was always to be deducted the "Maintenance of him, who waited at the Altar, "according to the Dignity and Quality of his "Perſon, Order, and Function. This was the Obſervation of a very good Friend to the *Church of England*, the late Lord Chancellor *Finch.* But as to the *Monaſteries*, certainly that was an excellent *Proviſion for the Poor*, where they might be ſupplied with Spiritual as well as Corporal Alms;

Alms; and such as it seems did not fail till the last; so that we needed no Law for *Provision for the Poor* till the Monasteries were dissolved. Which is that *Sin*, whereof the Learned and Judicious Mr. *Joseph Meed* saith, *the whole Body of the Reformation is notoriously guilty*; *which, nevertheless*, saith he, *is accounted no Sin, and yet such a one as I know not whether God ever passed by without some visible and remarkable Judgment*. Ep. 14. p. 760. (*v.* Ep. 58. p. 829. Disc. 2. p. 15, 17. & Disc. 27. p. 119.) and the Judgment he thought begun upon some, (*v.* p. 17. & 829.) and expected more to follow. And since the Righteous God is a severe Revenger of the Indignities and Injuries done to his Saints; nor can he be thought to have less regard to Sacred Persons than to Sacred things, I know no reason why the great Defects of pious and a compleat Christian Education, which are now notorious in our Universities, and that Blindness, and Spirit of Sloath and Slumber, which, from thence, seems to have seized and possessed all Ranks and Qualities of Persons and Parties amongst us, may not be a special Judgment of God for that Universal Prejudice and Contempt, which upon the Scandals of some, the prophane Sacrilegious Impiety of others, and the inconsiderate Rashness and Indiscretion of many more, have raised against it.

FINIS.